Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons

P. Sundarayya

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Published by:
Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd.
under the imprint of Foundation Books
Cambridge House
4381/4 Ansari Road
Daryaganj
New Delhi- 110 002

C-22, C-Block, Brigade M.M., K.R. Road, Jayanagar, **Bangalore**- 560 070
Plot No. 80, Service Industries, Shirvane, Sector-1, Nerul, **Navi Mumbai**- 400 706
10, Raja Subodh Mullick Square, 2nd Floor, **Kolkata**- 700 013
21/1 (New No. 49), 1st Floor, Model School Road, Thousand Lights, **Chennai**- 600 006
House No. 3-5-874/6/4, (Near Apollo Hospital), Hyderguda, **Hyderabad**- 500 029

© Sundarayya Vignana Kendram
First Published: December 1972
Publisher: Desraj Chadha
On behalf of the
Communist Party of India (Marxist)
49 Lake Place, Kolkata 700 029

Reprint 2006
Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd.
On behalf of the
Sundarayya Vignana Kendram
Bagh Lingampally
Hyderabad 500 044

ISBN: 978-81-7596-825-7

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Published by Manas Saikia for Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd.

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Preface

At last, after 20 year's delay, we are able to place this book on "Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons" in the hands of the readers. Our effort has been to give the reader a comprehensive narration of the development of Telangana People's Struggle, and all the relevant details available, in order to point out the most important political lessons that emerge from the experience of this movement. We are conscious that many other details of actions of people, guerrillas and cadre which should have found a place in this book may not be there. It is due to lack of those details with us, as the participants of that great struggle failed to record their experiences, their knowledge of people's reactions and their own feeling during the period or later. Whenever those accounts become available, it will not be difficult to include them and have a fuller and more comprehensive history of the Telangana People's Struggle. In this narrative, there may be many factual discrepancies with regard to minor details but those, too, can be corrected, if the participants or readers point them out. We have avoided narrating the activities and the role of various participants, their positive and negative features, especially of most of the living personnel, for obvious reasons, except when it becomes absolutely essential to pinpoint political generalisations and that, too, in very general terms.

Certain colleagues of ours have pointed out to us that the narrative and the book could have been more vivid and graphic and this book does not fully bear out the rich experience and the heroism of the movement. We are acutely conscious of this weakness but it can be remedied only if the participants themselves write out or recount their experiences, even after a long time.

There has been criticism that there are too many minor details, many a repetition, and some accounts appear to be exaggerated and unreal. The exact number of those killed and the wounded and number of participants in many an encounter cannot be verified after the passage of so much time, when the Government records are not yet available, and the truth is sought to be suppressed by the authorities. We have not tried to edit the narration of the events, as given by some of the chroniclers, or as recorded in the available reports from the lower units to higher centres. It was difficult even at that time of actual occurrence, leave alone now, to verify the exact details. So we tried to stick to the chroniclers' narrations and to the recorded reports in the files without going deeply into them. We feel that if we tried to avoid giving many details or 'repetitions', it would have made this narration too general without bringing the mood, the feelings of the participants and of the people at that time, or of what they felt and believed then. In giving brief sketches of the martyrs, we tried to give whatever was available in the records and accounts given by the comrades. There are many omissions of

many key cadre, squad members, whose deeds and activities need special narration. We would appeal to all those old participants to compile the reminiscences of all those martyrs, so that the future generations can be educated by their example.

Similarly, though it is generally estimated that about 4,000 were killed by police, military and landlord terror during 1946–1951, excluding thousands of Koya people who died of diseases in concentration camps, some investigators say that the figure is nearer 6,000. We do not have the names of all of them, nor even the names of villages from where they were picked up and shot dead. We hope comrades and people will collect, even now, the names and number of those killed, village after village, in the struggle. We are giving whatever names are available with us.

Comrade M. Basavapunnaiah helped me to improve this book by many of his suggestions. I have to specially mention the services of Comrade Unnikrishnan, our Central Committee steno-typist, without whose patient typing and re-typing again and again, I could not have completed this book; and of Comrade Ramdass, our Central Committee member, who took all the trouble and responsibility of going through the manuscript again and again and got it ready for the press and brought it out, ploughing through all the proofs.

P. Sundarayya

Introduction

It is now 20 years since the Telangana peasants armed struggle was withdrawn on October 21, 1951. There is no authentic narration, even in outline, of how this struggle developed in that Nizam-governed feudal Hyderabad State into a peasants and people's armed revolt, the intervention by the Indian Army on September 13, 1948, and the heroic armed resistance put up by the peasant masses for three years to defend the lands they gained earlier from being seized by the landlords backed by the Nehru Government armed forces. Avowed enemies and hostile critics of this great movement have produced tons of literature denouncing the struggle as Communist "violence, banditry and anarchy".

The right Communists are vociferous in depicting it, particularly the stage of the partisan resistance during the years 1949–51, as sectarian, dogmatic and individual terrorism in the main. The Naxalite leaders are busy carrying on the smear campaign that the leadership of the Telangana struggle betrayed it in calling it off in October 1951.

To present, in brief, an overall balance sheet of this heroic peasant uprising: it exacted tremendous sacrifices from the fighting peasantry of Telangana and the Visalandhra state unit of the Communist Party which was destined to lead this popular peasant uprising. As many as 4,000 Communists and peasant militants were killed; more than 10,000 Communist cadres and people's fighters were thrown into detention camps and jails for a period of 3–4 years, no less than 50,000 people were dragged into police and military camps from time to time to be beaten, tortured and terrorised for weeks and months together; several lakhs of people in thousands of villages were subjected to police and military raids and suffered cruel lathi-charges; the people in the course of these military and police raids lost properties worth millions of rupees which were either looted or destroyed; thousands of women were molested and had to undergo all sorts of humiliations and indignities; to sum up, the entire region was subjected to a brutal police and military terror rule for full five years, initially by the Nizam and his Razakar armed hordes, and subsequently by the combined armed forces of the Union Government and the State Government of Hyderabad. After the police action, a huge 50,000-strong force of armed personnel of different categories was deployed to violently suppress the movement and restore the shattered landlord rule. According to some unofficial estimates, the Government of India had spent as much money and resources in Hyderabad then as it had spent in its war with Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir during the years 1947–1948.

Of course, the picture is not complete without its second side, the picture of an impressive record of achievements and gains to the credit of the peasant

uprising. During the course of the struggle, the peasantry in about 3,000 villages, covering roughly a population of 3 million in an area of about 16,000 square miles, mostly in the three districts of Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam, had succeeded in setting up gram raj, on the basis of village panchayats. In these villages, the hated landlords—the pillars of Nizam's autocracy in the rural areas—were driven away from their fortress-like houses – *gadis* - and their lands were seized by the peasantry. One million acres of land was redistributed among the peasantry under the guidance of the people's committees. All evictions were stopped and the forced labour service was abolished. The plunderous and exorbitant rates of usury were either drastically cut down or altogether forbidden. The daily wages of agricultural labourers were increased and a minimum wage was enforced. The oppressive forest officialdom was forced to abandon the entire forest belt and the tribals and the people living in the adjoining areas of these forests were able to enjoy the fruits of their labour. For a period of 12 to 18 months the entire administration in these areas was conducted by the village peasant committees. During the course of this struggle against the Nizam's autocracy, the people could organise and build a powerful militia comprising 10,000 village squad members and about 2,000 regular guerrilla squads, in defence of the peasantry against the armed attacks of the Razakars and the Nizam's police. Lakhs of peasants, for the first time in their lives, could have their two regular meals a day. In a nutshell, this historic peasant rebellion shook the medieval autocratic regime of the Asafjahi dynasty to its roots, delivering death-blows against it.

To this heroic peasant resistance movement goes the credit of pushing the question of the agrarian revolution into the forefront, compelling the unwilling hands of the Congress leaders to embark upon various agrarian reforms, however half-hearted and pitiful they were. It was during the course of this struggle that the *bhoodan* utopia was conceived by Sri Vinobha Bhave, the sarvodaya leader, who was sent there by the Congress leaders for the so-called pacification campaign and anti-Communist propaganda among the peasantry. It was in the course of this bitter and prolonged struggle that people came to grasp the truth that the land problem can never be really resolved by the honeyed phrases and pompous promises of the bourgeois-landlord rulers but a powerful organised militant mass struggle alone can do it.

Let us also remember again that not a small share of credit goes to the Telangana struggle for forcing the pace of States' reorganisation on a linguistic basis, enabling the several disunited and dismembered nationalities to realise their long-cherished democratic demand for separate statehood. The powerful blows that this struggle delivered to the biggest princely regime of Hyderabad, inspired the struggle which won the Andhra State, after the martyrdom of Potti Sreeramulu in 1952 and this, in turn, paved the way for the formation of linguistic states throughout India in 1956, forcing the ruling Congress leadership to demolish the unprincipled and arbitrary division of the country made by the former British rulers. The heroic Telangana peasant struggle thus made its

unique contribution to redrawing the political map of India on a national, democratic, and sound linguistic basis.

In this connection, it is very necessary to realise that the Communist Party which had the proud role of leading this historic Telangana revolt and had to bear the brunt of the repression with tremendous sacrifices, the Communist Party which was at the head of the Vayalar-Punnappra struggle in Kerala, which was at the head of the postwar peasant struggles and the working class struggles in Bengal, emerged as a result, on the national political scene as a widely recognised and effective political force to be seriously reckoned with. From a small force of militant working class trends that it used to be till then to shaping the destinies of India's multi-millions, the Communist Party earned the prestige and honour of emerging as the single biggest opposition group in the first Parliament, following the 1952 general elections.

Finally, the single biggest contribution made by the Telangana peasant revolt to the Communist movement in India is of tremendous importance as this struggle brought to the forefront of the Indian Communist movement almost all the basic theoretical and ideological questions concerning the strategy and tactics of the Indian people's democratic revolution for correct and scientific answers and realistic and practical solutions. A series of issues such as the role of the peasantry in the people's democratic revolution, the place and significance of partisan resistance and rural revolutionary bases, the question of doing a concrete analysis the classification among the peasantry, and role played in the revolution by the different strata of the peasantry, the perspective for the Indian revolution, the specific place and role of the working class and urban centres in our revolution, the precise meaning and import of the concept of working class hegemony and the part played by the Communist Party in realising it in an underdeveloped and backward country like ours, where the modern working class does not exceed one per cent of the population, et cetera, were thrown up for serious inner-party debate and decision. Life and experience, after a prolonged inner-party struggle, enabled the Party to arrive at a fairly correct political line, with satisfactory answers to most of the problems posed.

It is relevant to mention here that during the course of the struggle, particularly during the phase of its last two years, the Communist Party from top to bottom was sharply divided into two hostile camps, one defending the struggle and its achievements and the other denouncing and decrying it as terrorism, etc. Those who opposed this struggle had even openly come out in the press, providing grist to the mill of the enemies in maligning the struggle and the Communist Party that was leading it. This sharp political-ideological split though enveloping the entire Party in the country, was particularly sharp and acute in the Party's Visalandhra unit which was directly and immediately involved in this valiant peasant uprising. Subsequently, history demonstrated that the inner-party unity achieved, following the withdrawal of the Telangana armed resistance in October 1951, was only formal, superficial and temporary, and the division actually got crystallised into two distinct hostile political trends. It was not

just accidental, and may be of interest to note, that in the Party split that came about in the year 1962–1963, the division in the State Party unit of Visalandhra remained, more or less, of the same character and with the same composition as was witnessed during the 1950–1951 inner-party strife. With the exception of a handful of individual Communist leaders and cadres, who might have changed their loyalties and political convictions, the bulk that stood opposed to the Telangana struggle, on one count or the other, opted out to the side of the right reformist and revisionist Right Communist Party; while the overwhelming majority, that defended the struggle to the last, rallied firmly behind the Communist Party of India (Marxist). No serious student of the Indian Communist movement can succeed in getting to the root cause and reason that inevitably paved the way for the split in 1962-63 if he were to bypass the struggle of Telangana and the various inner-party controversies that broke around the issue of conducting this valiant peasant resistance movement.

I had the opportunity to be closely associated with the development of the Communist movement in the Andhra and Telangana areas from its very inception, and had been closely associated with the Telangana struggle, at its various stages, and also in fighting back the Congress and landlord *zoolum* let loose to completely liquidate all the gains of Telangana during the last two decades, after the withdrawal of the armed struggle.

Considering it my elementary duty, in which I failed during the last two decades, at least to outline the rich and varied revolutionary experiences and lessons of that glorious struggle, I have tried to narrate here the story of the Telangana struggle based mainly on the factual material contained in reports that were received from different area organisers of the Telangana struggle, at that time, and also on the basis of personal experiences of many of those leading comrades who were and even now are in the thick of the movement. I am placing here some of the experiences and lessons which, I think, we have to draw from the Telangana struggle.

PART I

1

Hyderabad State–its Socio-Political Background

The Hyderabad state which was formed by the Nizam, after the death of the last Mughal Emperor, was reduced to a subsidiary feudatory state, covering an area of about 83,000 square miles, under the British, after the cession of Berar of Maharashtra area and the coastal and the ceded districts of Andhra area to the British.

Multilingual State

The Hyderabad state consisted of three linguistic areas: the eight Telugu-speaking districts with Hyderabad city, the capital of the State, constituting the Telangana area; five Marathi-speaking districts, in the north-west of the State, constituting the Marathwada region; and three Kannada-speaking districts in the south-western part.

The Telangana region occupied 50 per cent of the area, as against 28 per cent of the Marathwada region, and the remaining 22 per cent of the Kannada region. The Telugu-speaking population in 1951 was 9,000,000 (50 per cent), Marathi-speaking about 4,500,000 (25 per cent) and Kannada-speaking 2,000,000 (11 per cent) while the Urdu-speaking population was 2,100,000 (12 per cent).

In no part of the State, except perhaps in Hyderabad city proper, were the Urdu-speaking people in majority. But since the Nizam was a Muslim, and it was his kingdom, Urdu was made the language of the courts and the administration at all levels, and also the medium of instruction from the primary stage. Only with the special permission of the Nizam and his administrators could private schools for children be started, even at middle school level, in the mother-tongues of the people—Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. Even language libraries and literary associations could be started only with the permission of the authorities. No wonder, the literacy rate was only 6 per cent.

Thus the culture and the language of the overwhelming majority of the people living in the Hyderabad state were sought to be suppressed by the rulers, and the natural desire for education and cultural development, for protection and development of their mother-tongue got inevitably linked up with the struggle against the Nizam's rule.

Conflict between the Muslim Ruler and the Hindu Subjects

The Nizam of Hyderabad was only a vassal of the British imperialists. He was a Muslim, while the vast majority of his subjects were Hindus. This situation gave rise to a glaring imbalance in the administrative set up of the State. Though the Muslim population was only about 12 per cent, the whole administrative setup, especially in the higher echelons, was overwhelmingly Muslim. The Nizam and mullas tried to instill a feeling that the Muslims were the ruling class and they had a right to lord over the rest of the people of the state. Against this, the growing middle class intellectuals, and the growing Hindu business and industrial interests took up the cudgels, and the Arya Samajists became the champions of the 'Hindu masses' against the 'Muslim oppressors'. There was a large number of conflicts and clashes between these sections.

In the early days, till the 1940s, the Indian National Congress refused to take up the struggle of the people against the 'princes and nawabs' of the native states. This also left the field free for the Arya Samajists to come forward as the champions of the struggle against autocracy; it enabled them to orient the democratic awakening of the people, to a considerable extent, on to communal lines.

One of the aspects of this Muslim feudal rule was reflected in the language policy of the state, making Urdu dominate, at the cost of major languages, which were the mother-tongues of the overwhelming majority of the people of the state.

Later, during the Telangana struggle of 1946–1948, the Nizam and his feudal administrators, his armed Razakars, tried to rally the Muslim masses to support them against the 'Hindus'. But thanks to the leadership of the Communist Party, large numbers of the Muslim peasantry, rural artisans and the rural poor were rallied behind the fighting Telangana peasantry, though it has to be admitted that a vast section of Muslims in the towns and cities supported the Nizam and the Razakars. It was again thankfully due to the Party's leadership, that the reprisals against Muslims, after the 'police action', were prevented in the Telangana area, whereas in the Marathwada region, in many areas where the democratic movement was not so strong as in Telangana, there occurred large scale Muslim repression.

The utter isolation of the 'Muslim ruler' from the vast mass of his 'Hindu subjects' was an important factor that enabled the rallying of various sections against the hated ruler.

The Feudal Oppression

The basic feature that dominated the socio-economic life of the people of Hyderabad, especially in Telangana, was the unbridled feudal exploitation that persisted well-nigh till the beginning of the Telangana armed peasant struggle.

Out of the 53,000,000 acres in the whole of Hyderabad State, about 30,000,000 acres, i.e., about 60 per cent, were under governmental land revenue system, (called

diwani or *khalsa* area); about 15,000,000 acres, i.e., about 30 per cent, under the *jagirdari* system, and about 10 per cent as the Nizam's own direct estate, i.e., *sarf khas* system. It was only after the police action that the *sarf khas* and *jagirdari* systems were abolished, and these lands were merged in *diwani* (brought under governmental land revenue system).

The income or loot from the peasantry, from the *sarf khas* area, amounting to Rs. 20,000,000 annually was entirely used to meet the expenditure of the Nizam's family and its retinue. The whole area was treated as his private estate. He was not bound to spend any amount for economic and social benefit or development of people's livelihood in that area. If anything was spent, it used to be from other general revenues of the state. In addition, the Nizam Nawab used to get Rs. 7,000,000 per annum from the state treasury.

After the police action when the *sarf khas* area was merged in the *diwani* area, the Nizam and his family offspring were to be paid Rs. 5,000,000 per annum as compensation, apart from another Rs. 5,000,000 as the privy purse. The peasants in these areas were nothing but bond-slaves, or total serfs under the Nizam. Even whatever little rights existed in the *diwani* area were denied to them.

The *jagir* areas constituted 30 per cent of the total state. In these areas, *paigas*, *samsthanam*, *jagirdars*, *ijardars*, *banjardars*, *maktedars, inamdars,* or *agraharams,* were the various kinds of feudal oppressors. Some of these used to have their own revenue officers to collect the taxes they used to impose. Some of them used to pay a small portion to the state while some others were not required to pay anything. In these areas, various kinds of illegal exactions and forced labour were the norm. Some of these *jagirs*, *paigas* and *samsthanams*, especially the bigger ones, had their own separate police, revenue, civil and criminal systems; they were sub-feudatory states under the Nizam's state of Hyderabad which was itself a stooge native state under the British autocracy in India. In *jagir* areas, the land taxes on irrigated lands used to be 10 times more than those collected in *diwani* (government) areas, amounting to Rs. 150 per acre or 20–30 mounds of paddy per acre.

The *paigas* were estates granted to Muslim feudals, especially the Nizam's relatives, for recruiting and maintaining armed personnel to help the Nizam in his wars. The *jagirs* and *samsthanams* were those given to reward officers, who distinguished themselves in serving the Nizam. *Maktas*, *banjars*, *agraharams* and *inams* were given for various services, and these owners were entitled to fleece the peasantry and take as much as they could extract. There used to be *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes* who were earlier the tax collectors for the Government, but later on, under the Nizam Government's Salar Jung diwanship (Chief Ministership), when direct tax collection by the state apparatus was introduced, these *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes* were granted *vatans* or *mash* (annuities), based on percentage of the past collections, in perpetuity. These *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes* as collectors of taxes, grabbed thousands of acres of the best fertile cultivated land, and made it their own property. The peasants cultivating these lands were reduced to the position of tenants-at-will.

How did they come to own these lands? These feudal landlords had acquired them by foul means from the ordinary people. The major portion of the lands cultivated by the peasants came to be occupied by the landlords, during the first survey settlement. These people who had power in their hands got lands registered in their names without the knowledge of the peasants who were cultivating them and the peasants came to know of it only afterwards when it was too late to do anything. Thus, these feudal lords got possession of unlimited vast lands and made them their legal possession.

Even lands which were left in possession of the peasants in the survey settlement, were occupied by the landlords in the years of the economic crisis of 1920–1922 and 1930–1933, when the peasants either due to bad harvests or unfair prices for the crops were unable to pay the taxes; these feudal landlords used to torture the peasants who were unable to pay the taxes and get hold of their lands. Many a time this acquisition used to take place even without the knowledge of the peasants. They used to lend agricultural produces like grain, chillies, et cetera, to the peasants at exorbitant usurious rates and later under the pretext of non-repayment of these loans, used to confiscate the lands. This system was prevalent at the time of the Telangana struggle.

One can imagine the extent of the acquisition of lands, if it is mentioned, that the Jannareddi Pratap Reddy family had one and a half lakh acres and laid a mango-grove in one plot of 750 acres of land. In the days of the struggle, village organisations (*gram rajyams*) collected information on such lands seized through foul means by the landlords and restored them to the peasants, the rightful owners.

These landlords are not only *deshmukhs* but also village chiefs – *patel, patwari, mali patel* – with hereditary rights. Each one used to get five to ten villages under him as *vatan*.

These *vatan* villages were controlled through clerks or agents (*seridars)* appointed by the *deshmukh*. They enjoyed the rights of on officer. These *seridars* used to collect the products from the peasants by force, and do all other jobs including supplying all information about the village. If there was any quarrel or friction amongst the villagers, it could not be settled without the knowledge of the landlord. Depending upon the nature of the quarrel, the *deshmukhs* used to decide whether it should be settled in his house *(gadi)* or outside in the village centre or elsewhere. If it was a small matter, the *deshmukh's* agent would be entrusted with it, but if it was a big affair, then it was settled in the presence of the *deshmukh* in his house. To this category of rich landlords belonged people like the Babasahebpeta landlord, Visnoor Ramachandra Reddy, etc.

Pingali Venkatrama Reddy (Waddepalli *deshmukh*) got excise contracts for the whole of Telangana, all for himself. In those days, excise (*abkari*) contract meant full control over the villages.

If this was the state of exploitation by the feudal lords in *ryotwari* areas, one can imagine what it must have been in *jagirdari* areas. These *jagirdars* and

deshmukhs had licenses for rifles and guns, had cavalry squads and armed forces as well.

Vetti System

The *vetti* system (forced labour and exactions) is generally taken to be confined to tribal areas or some of the most backward social communities in other areas. But in Telangana *vetti* system was an all-pervasive social phenomenon affecting all classes of people, in varying degrees. Each harijan family had to send one man from the family to do *vetti.* In a small hamlet (*palle*) each house will send one man. Their daily job consisted of household work in the house of the *patel, patwari mali-patel* or *deshmukh,* to carry reports to police stations, taluk office (*tehsil*); keep watch on the village *chavadi* and the poundage. Besides these, there used to be more work for them whenever an officer came to the village *chavadi.* In village *Chilukur,* daily 16 harijans used to do *vetti.* They used to collect wood for fuel from the forests and carry post also. For carrying post or supplies they were supposed to get an anna for two and a half miles, which was of course not even honoured in practice. This system was known as '*kosuku visam*' in Telugu (i. e., $\frac{1}{16\text{th}}$ of a rupee for a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles).

Further, the harijans, who carried on the work of cobblers, tanning of leather and stitching shoes, or preparing leather accessories for agricultural operations, for drawing water from wells or yoke belts for plough cattle, or for draught bullocks, were forced to supply these to the landlords free of cost while the rest of the peasantry used to pay them fixed annuities in grain and other agricultural produce.

Certain other backward communities, like *boyalu, bestalu* and *chakali* (washermen) were forced to carry on their shoulders men and women of the landlord families in specially made carriers *(pallakis* or *menas*) over long distances from one village to another, whenever they wished to see their relatives or go to festivals. When members of the landlord family travel in their fast bullock carts, they are forced to run ahead of the carts as well as behind them as path clearers and escort. When they rode on horses, the horse servants were suppose to run beside them.

Toddy-tappers had to tap toddy and set apart 5 to 10 trees for exclusively free supply to the landlords' families, and supply them five pots of toddy everyday, and a larger quantity on festive occasions.

Weavers had to supply clothes to the landlords' household servants. The carpenters and blacksmiths were to supply agricultural implements free of costs to the landlords and also carry out free repairs.

Washermen were forced to wash clothes and vessels in the houses of the *deshmukhs* and village officials. They had to carry cots and beds for officers who camped in the village *chavadi* and bring all that was necessary for cooking. In the officers' houses, they had to grind turmeric and pound chillies.

Potters had to give the necessary number of pots to the officers and landlords. Even if the *jagirdar* or *deshmukh* was staying in Hyderabad the potter had to walk all the way there and supply him all the pots needed. An officer camping in the village *chavadi* would get his pots from the potter and the cooking also done.

Barbers had to do daily service in the house of the *deshmukhs* and at night the feet massage of the landlord and body.

Shepherds were forced to give away sheep from each of their herd on every auspicious function in the landlord's house or on all village festival days. They were forced to give it whenever landlords demanded it on some pretext or other.

The merchants in the villages had to supply all the commodities by turn including good ghee on receipt of a letter from the police *patel* for any officer who came to the village. If they did *not* have something or did not give anything or opposed the demand, they were subjected to torture and to various indignities.

Villagers, especially the poor who did not have any other goods to supply were forced to supply fowls to them. The peasants were also not spared of this *vetti*. Whenever any officer came they had to be given a lift in their carts by the peasants, and had to be taken to their destinations, even at odd times, whether the animals were fed or not. They had to till the lands of the village officials and landlords before they could take up work on their own fields. And till the landlords' lands were watered, the peasants would not get water for their fields. Agricultural labourers had to work in the fields of the officials and landlords without any remuneration and then only go to other peasants' work for their livelihood.

These various forms of forced labour and exactions were extracted not only by the landlords but also by all the officials, petty or high, either living in the villages or when they came on tours or on special visits.

The worst of all these feudal exactions was the prevalence of keeping girls as 'slaves' in landlords' houses. When landlords gave their daughters in marriage they presented these slave girls and sent them along with their married daughters, to serve them in their new homes. These slave girls were used by the landlords as concubines.

Thus the *vetti* system had made the life of the Telangana people one of utter degradation and of abject serfdom.

It had ruined man's self-respect completely. The movement for its abolition became widespread.

When these feudal lords of various hues tried to intensify their illegal exactions, to evict the cultivating peasants from their lands and lease them to some others, the peasants fought many a heroic struggle, even earlier. One such heroic struggle was that of a poor Muslim peasant Bandagi, against Visunuri Deshmukh during the twenties, whose martyrdom was immortalised in the popular drama *Ma Bhoomi* (My Land), during the Telangana days of 1945–1946. Two

hundred amateur groups staged this play throughout the whole of Andhra Pradesh and wherever Telugu people lived in the whole of India.

Again, it was on this issue that the peasantry came into head-on confrontation with the feudal lords at the beginning of the 1940s.

But by that time, the Communist Party had become an organised force, and was able to identify itself with these fighting oppressed tenants and the rural poor. So the movement took a qualitatively different aspect, compared to past struggles.

Some of these notorious feudal *deshmukhs* who owned tens of thousands of acres, against whom bitter battles were fought, during 1940, are listed below:

1. Visunur Deshmukh—40,000 acres, landlord over 40 villages in Jangaon taluka, Nalgonda district.
2. Suryapet Deshmukh—20,000 acres.
3. Babasahebpet Deshmukh—10,000 acres, Miryalagudem taluka.
4. Kalluru Deshmukh—100,000 acres, Madhira taluka, Khammam district.
5. Jannareddy Pratap Reddy—150,000 acres, Suryapeta taluka.

Here are a few more examples of the big landlords, who owned more than 5,000 acres, in a few talukas to which the movement spread: Mallapuram Rangareddi, Chandampalli Doralu, Mosongi Doralu of Koppolu, of Devarakonda taluka; Cherukupolli Narasimhareddi of Miryalagudem taluka; Betavolu zamindar, Kapugallu Muttavarapu family, Penubadu Seetaram Rao of Huzurnagar taluka; Chandupatla Sudarshana Rao, Dupalli Venkatarama Reddy of Bhuvanagiri taluka; Musakuri family of Tangadapalli, Alwala family of Polapalli of Ibrahimpatnam taluka; Mandameri Madhava Rao (10000); Pusukuri family (10–20,000 acres); Narsapur Samsthanam (50–100 thousand acres) of Lakkisettipeta taluka, Adilabad district.

The land concentration in Hyderabad state and the Telangana region was tremendous. The administrative report of 1950–1951 gave figures to show that in the three districts of Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar and Warangal, the number of *pattadars* (landlords) owning more than 500 acres were about 550, owning 60 to 70 per cent of the total cultivable land.

The extent of exploitation indulged in by these *jagirdars*, *paigas* and *samsthanams* can be imagined from the fact that 110 of them used to collect Rs. 100,000,000 every year in various taxes or exactions from the peasantry. Out of this amount, Rs. 55,000,000 used to be appropriated by 19 of them, while the whole revenue income of the Hyderabad state before 1940 was no more than Rs. 80,000,000. This was only the legally admitted collections. But it was a well-known fact that total collections, legal and illegal, amounted to times this amount. When the Nizam issued his *firmana* banning illegal exactions, it mentioned 82 varieties of illegal exactions.

But this *firmana* remained a mere paper proclamation. The *jagirdars, deshmukhs*, and the big landlords continued their illegal forcible forages with the

deshmukhs, and the big landlords continued their illegal forcible forages with the active connivance of the corrupt officialdom of the Nizam state. To give one example:

Visunur Ramachandra Reddy, the notorious *deshmukh* in Janagaon *tehsil* of Nalgonda district, used to forcibly seize the lands from the tenants and the peasants. He used to force the peasants in his area, of about 40 villages, to do forced labour in his fields, all through the year; pay *nazarana* (presents in kind or cash) at the birth of a child in the family, marriage or death; (every handicraftsman, artisan, merchant had to pay a certain portion of his products or fixed amounts in cash. The cobblers—shoes and harness; shepherds—blankets and supply of sheep and goats for the feast and free milk; and peasants—grain, vegetables, etc.). He built a house costing Rs. 200,000 in the thirties and forties, out of which nearly half the cost was collected in cash from the forced labour for various construction jobs. A young mother, who had delivered a child only three days earlier, was made to do forced labour in his fields, leaving the infant at home, with nobody to look after it and the child died of lack of milk and care. He was so notorious that peasants hesitated to give their daughters in marriage to persons living in those villages. It was against such forced labour and illegal exactions and evictions that the Andhra Mahasabha, the cultural organisation of Telugu-speaking Andhra people of the Telangana region of the Hyderabad State, waged innumerable struggles. The beginnings of the Telangana armed struggle were against the atrocities of this very same Visunur deshmukh in 1946, when his goondas attacked and murdered Doddi Komarayya, the local Andhra Mahasabha worker, in Kadivendi village on July 4.

Wretched Conditions of Workers and Middle Class Employees

In 1941, in the Telangana area, there were about 500 factories employing about 28,000 workers. Many of the big factories like textiles, mines, paper mills, engineering factories were heavily subsidised and large amounts of loans granted by the Government to these owners—Salarjung, Babu Khan, Lahoti, Alauddin, Dorabji, Chenoy, Tayabji, Laik Ali, Pannalal Pitti, etc. They made huge profits during the war, selling their goods in the black market.

But the workers were miserably paid, the textile workers' wage being Rs. 10 to 15 per month. Eighty per cent of the wage earners got Rs. 15 per month. In the Azamjahi Mills of Warangal, 4,000 workers the wage bill was of Rs. 13.63 lakhs in 1943, while the managing agent's commission amounted to Rs. 7. 44 lakhs; in the Ramgopal Mills of Hyderabad, wage bill 1,500 workers' was Rs. 4 lakhs while the managing agents commission was Rs. 1.35 lakhs.

The higher government officials, numbering 1,500, were paid Rs. 50 million per year, while the wages for many lower categories varied between 12, 16, 30 and 60 rupees per month.

Nearly two lakh Muslims were employed in various government services,

salaries varying from Rs. 12 to Rs. 30. It is no wonder that these government employees were forced to supplement their meagre salaries by various other devious methods. Quite a large number of Muslims used to depend on many handicrafts like carpet making, printing textile (*nagansazi*), handlooms, et cetera., and were forced for a miserable living.

The Nizam encouraged the formation of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, in 1927, to bolster the support of the Muslim masses to his kingdom, on the plea that 'Muslims are the rulers'. In 1928, it adopted as one of its objects, 'to develop loyalty to the King and his Government'. They used to propagate the divine theory of kingship—that the Nizam was 'the shadow of god', 'Jill-ul-Alla', etc. They were for an independent Hyderabad state, having direct relations with British paramountcy. They demanded that the ceded territories of the coastal and Rayalaseema districts, as well as the Berar area, be restored to the Nizam. This organisation was totally opposed to any democratic movement in the state, any form of democratic or responsible government set-up. They were for "full authority" for the Nizam. They tried their best to keep the Muslim workers, peasants, toiling sections of the middle classes from joining hands with their Hindu class brothers and waging a common struggle against Hindu-Muslim *jagirdars*, landlords and capitalists and the Nizam Government.

The Beginnings of Andhra Mahasabha

The Nizam Nawab's rule was an autocratic rule. There were no elected bodies at any level, from the village to the state. He used to have his own nominated advisory council and his nominated Chief Minister. He used to run the administration by issuing *firmanas,* which had the same effect of legislation and executive order rolled into one. He appointed *nazims,* departmental secretaries.

Needless to say there were no civil liberties whatsoever. Even for literary associations, or holding any public meeting even for literary purposes, prior permission of the local officer had to be obtained. It was the autocratic rule of officers from top to bottom.

The Nizam state had its own monetary system and customs; and in its name, a large number of customs-posts were created all round the state, which effectively barred every kind of progressive literature. With his own *mulki* rules, and a large number of police guards, every entrant into the state being noted, address taken, and watched and harassed, he sought to make contacts with the progressive forces in India, outside his own Hyderabad dominion, impossible. He had his own railway system; at every station, his customs police used to interrogate detainees and check the luggage. Even when the Nizam's police kept a watch in trains, harassment of the suspected political activists continued.

It was against such a regime that the growing number of intellectuals and liberals, influenced by the development of the national movement in India, finally succeeded in organising themselves into the Andhra Mahasabha in the Telangana region, into the Maharashtra Parishad and Kannada Parishad in the other two

region, into the Maharashtra Parishad and Kannada Parishad in the other two regions.

Here it is not possible to give details of the various struggles waged by the people against the Nizam and his feudal exploitation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or in the first quarter of the twentieth century, nor the Nizam's role of being a stooge in the hands of the British imperialists and how he helped them to suppress the freedom struggles in India, especially the War of Independence of 1857.

It was in 1928 that the Andhra Mahasabha was formed under the leadership of Sri Madapati Hanumantha Rao and others. Its first conference was held in Jogipeta in 1930 under the chairmanship of Suravaram Pratapa Reddy. In conferences, it used to pass resolutions demanding certain reforms in the administrative structure, for more schools, for certain concessions for the landed gentry, for certain civil liberties, but did not try to mobilise the people and launch struggles against the oppressors or against the Nizam's Government. But it became in those wretched and tremendously oppressive conditions in Hyderabad state, a forum, a focal point for the rising democratic aspirations of the people.

The Indian National Congress had adopted a policy of non-interference in the native states. It did not start organising its branches in the states and launch movements against native stooges of the British (the kings and nawabs of the Indian states), on the pattern of the struggles they launched against the British imperialists in what was known as British India. Consistent with their bourgeois compromising theories of bringing a certain amount of mass pressure to get certain concessions, without allowing the anger and surge of the masses to go beyond their control to revolutionary channels, the leadership of the Indian National Congress did not encourage the States' people's struggles against the native princes.

But the youth, militant, democratic elements from these states, had in large numbers joined the national movements that were being conducted in British Indian territory and hundreds courted arrest in the Salt Satyagraha and non-cooperation movements in 1930–1932. Many of these participants, after their release, carried the ideas of revolt and tried to organise the people in their own states, utilising every opportunity that opened up before them.

In Hyderabad state, in the Telangana region, the Andhra Mahasabha became their forum, and they tried to develop it as a broad political organisation. Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and Baddam Yella Reddy were the notable figures in this movement. They were elected for responsible posts in the Andhra Mahasabha, even for the presidentship and secretaryship. Later on, these two leaders along with the whole bunch of active, militant, progressive elements of the Andhra Mahasabha, i.e., Ch. Lakshmi Narasayya, S. Ramanatham, D. Venkateswar Rao, A. Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy and Kodanda Rami Reddy, joined the Communist movement by 1940–1942, and transformed the Andhra Mahasabha from a liberal organisation into an anti-Nizam united mass militant organisation — a united front against the Nizam, leading the youth, peasants, traders, manufacturers and middle classes.

It was in 1938, when the Nizam authorities banned the singing of *Vande Mataram,* in those days the national anthem of the Indian people struggling for independence, the students backed by all democratic forces in the state, started their struggle to vindicate their right to sing their patriotic song. It spread to schools and colleges all over the state. When colleges were closed, a large number of these patriotic students went to the neighbouring states, studied there in the colleges and returned to carry on the struggle in their own state.

It was after this movement that an effort was made to organise the State Congress. But it was banned; a satyagraha struggle was launched by the State Congress in which many active leaders of the Andhra Mahasabha also participated.

By that time, the Andhra unit of the Communist Party of India was able to contact many of the militant and progressive cadre and win them over to start regular units of the Party in Hyderabad State. It was able to build powerful groups in Telangana as it was able to win over many leading cadre like Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy, Sri Yella Reddy and others, to the Party. The party decision was to continue to develop the Andhra Mahasabha as a fighting all-inunited front organisation of the people of the Telangana region, to transform the Maharashtra and Kannada Parishads also similarly, and thus build a statewide mass movement. These organisations were also to function along with the State Congress, and mould the policies of the State Congress, as much as possible, to support and develop statewide militant struggles against the Nizam's misrule.

In 1940, in the Malkapuram session (seventh session) of the Andhra Mahasabha, the youth leadership came together. Party leader Ravi Narayan Reddy for the first time became the President of the Sabha, for its eighth Conference at Chilukuru. The AMS had reached the common people at the village level and had attracted their attention. At this stage, it crossed the tradition of merely passing resolutions and went ahead to rouse and rally the people around these resolutions. The Communist Party did stupendous work in taking this movement to the people. The moderates in the Andhra Mahasabha were opposed to this. The left in the AMS, led by the Communists, went ahead to address the problems of the people. They demanded the abolition of *vetti,* banning of rack-renting, no eviction of tenants but confirmation of title deeds *(patta* rights) to the lands they were cultivating, abolition of *Jagirdari,* drastic reduction of taxes and rents, compulsory survey settlements, *nakkee-malikana* tax abolition (tax on toddy trees), full responsible government and rallied the people behind these demands.

In the eleventh session of the AMS at Bhongir in 1944 under the presidentship of Ravi Narayan Reddy, there was a split and the right wing went out of the organisation and held a separate session. The main body of the AMS became the real leadership of the Telangana people. In 1945, the twelfth and last session of the AMS was held in Khammam in the war days, where it further called on the people to struggle actively for their demands.

Second World War and People's Struggles in Hyderabad State

The Second World War had broken out in 1939. It spread all over the world, with Hitler attacking the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the Japanese imperialists, in collaboration with the Hitlerites, attacking the American naval base in Pearl Harbour, thus starting its Pacific war against the American, British and French positions.

The British rulers of India automatically declared India to be at war, without even consulting the national leadership and elected legislatures. The Indian National Congress decided not to cooperate with the British war effort, till their demand for National Government at the Centre and the British Viceroy to act in accordance with the national Ministry thus formed, was met, and the pledge that after the war was over full transfer of power would take place. It asked the Congress Ministries in the provinces to resign and started individual satyagraha to bring pressure on the British Government.

The British did not bother much about the ineffective individual satyagraha movement. It went on with its war effort, intensified its exploitation of Indian resources and manpower, and the Indian army was sent abroad to fight for the British in many key sectors in Europe, Africa, West Asia, and later on in Burma, Malaya, etc. The militant section of the Indian National Congress led by Subhas Chandra Bose was opposed to the mild steps of the Congress leadership. They advocated a militant mass movement. Subhas Bose left India in disguise and later organised the Indian National Army with the aid of the Japanese and marched into Manipur and Assam in 1942-1944.

The Communist Party of India also advocated militant struggle for complete overthrow of the British imperialist Government in its *Proletarian Path*. It had to go underground and work. It could only carry on propaganda in most of the states as it was a small force; in Andhra it brought out secretly a magazine, *Swatantra Bharat*, and circulated it widely : 2,000 copies in about the same number of villages throughout the State. But the prestige of the Party had tremendously grown because of this militant line and the underground organisation and campaigns it carried on against the British imperialist war effort.

But with Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, and its rapid and deep penetration into the Soviet Union, if became the duty of every democratic force and especially the Communist movement to chalk out a programme of how, while effectively fighting the British imperialist domination in our country and other colonies, to help the Soviet Union and its allies to defeat the Hitler-Mussolini Tojo fascist tri-combination, its onslaught on the bastion of Socialism and the world democratic camp.

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru and those who followed him in the Congress were for support to the war effort and help to the Soviet side to win, but to do it effectively, to rouse the Indian people, they felt that effective power should be transferred

of power after the war. Certain other leaders of the Indian National Congress felt that it was the opportune time, when the British were in a tight corner, to bring maximum pressure, to get maximum concessions from the British. Since the British imperialists were not prepared to grant even the minimum which the Indian National Congress leadership demanded, the 1942 Quit India movement was launched. The British imperialists launched full-scale repression to suppress this movement violently.

It was in December 1941 that the Communist Party came out with its assessment of the new situation, six months after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. It was not easy for the Communist Party to come to a quick decision. It was clear to the Party that the war was no more between two groups of imperialist powers (one of the groups being fascist) as it had been from 1939 to 1941. The attack on the Soviet Union, the only socialist power then in the world, by the Hitler-Mussolini fascist combination, was the calculated, though desperate act of these fascist powers to clear their way for world domination by destroying the Soviet Union, which was blocking it, determinedly.

The British and French imperialists backed by the American imperialists, who had done all they could to nurse and arm the German imperialists and use them to attack the Soviet Union all through two decades, found themselves practically knocked out by Hitler's attack, when he turned his fire first against them, then on the Soviet Union. After those two years of war against Hitler, these powers were forced to declare their cooperation and sought alliance with the Soviet Union against Hitler. They were in a desperate position and the people in their countries would not have allowed them to do anything else, had they tried to make common cause with Hitler against the Soviets.

So, the victory of the Soviet Union, and its new war allies, the British, the French and later the American imperialist powers, over the Hitlerite fascist combine had become an urgent task in order to defend the democratic forces and pave the way for their victory throughout the world. But what guarantee was there that after the victory over Hitler, the imperialist powers, the British or the French, would give up their hold on their colonies, especially when even while they were in a desperate position, they were refusing to come to a compromise with the leaders of the national liberation struggles in their colonies? How to reconcile the two-fold task, of doing everything to see that the Soviet Union and its war-time allies won the war against Hitler and at the same time, to wrench freedom from the hands of British imperialists? It was this dilemma that faced the party, and it came out with the following analysis and line of action.

The war was no more an imperialist war. It had become a people's war. The imperialists were now prisoners in the people's camp. The victory in the people's war would lead to the liberation of our country and all other colonial countries then under the grip of imperialists. So all-out support to the war to aid the victory of the Soviet Union. Campaign for the formation of a National Government which alone could enthuse the Indian people to back up the war effort.

Government which alone could enthuse the Indian people to back up the war effort.

But the British Government refused to concede this demand and locked up the Congress leaders and started ruling with an iron hand. Our Party campaigned against this repression and the violence let loose by the British on the people. We also carried on a vigorous campaign for release of the Congress leaders. Because we were campaigning for these demands, a very large number of our cadre and supporters were also imprisoned by the British imperialists.

But this was not enough. Our Party should have actively participated in the struggle against the British refusal to form a national government by real transfer of power, and against its resorting to repression. While at the same time we could have continued our campaign of educating our fighting people against supporting Hitler and his allies, If they ever happened to start occupying our country, the resistance should be turned against them.

Our Party, it seems, had an exaggerated apprehension that any such struggle against the British would weaken the war efforts of the Soviet side and hamper its victory in the anti-fascist war.

The Party had also advocated Congress-League unity, to get the demand for national government conceded by the British. In its anxiety to achieve this unity, the Party applied the principle of self-determination of nations in a wrong way and advocated that the demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan was justified. It argued that only when that right was accepted, would the apprehensions of the Muslims of being dominated by the majority community disappear, and the unity of India be preserved and consolidated.

The Party failed to see and fight the separatism of the Muslim League leadership in its advocacy of a separate Pakistan State and how the Muslim League was objectively playing the game of the British imperialists in refusing to join hands with the Congress leadership in fighting against the British refusal to transfer power. Instead of concentrating on mobilising the masses who were behind the League and the Congress in a common fight against the British for real national independence, to achieve the common economic and democratic demands of vast masses of workers, peasants and other people of India, the Party based its slogans on the unity of the top leadership of the Congress and the League.

It was this wrong and one-sided emphasis of our Party on the need to strengthen the anti-fascist war effort, and also the Party's wrong emphasis on the right of self-determination without simultaneously fighting the separatist slogan of Pakistan, that alienated our Party from many anti-imperialist sections, and the youth in particular, in our country. They took our slogans and activities as subordinating our freedom struggle to the needs of Soviet defence and our advocacy of self-determination as one of supporting the division and disruption of Indian unity.

What saved our Party from greater isolation from the anti-imperialist masses was, by and large, the positive and correct stand of our Party on international

Our people ardently desired the victory of the Soviet Union over Hitler and also of the Chinese people over Japanese imperialism. The whole Indian national movement, especially Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's campaign against fascism, during the previous decade or two, moulded and nourished this urge. The mighty battles of the Soviet Union during the Second World War, and the heroic struggle of the Chinese people and the immense sacrifices of both these peoples, further strengthened this ardent desire of every democratic person and of all toilers in our country. The people saw that our Party was all out for the victory of the Soviet Union and of the Chinese people's liberation struggle, and appreciated it.

Our Party was able to function legally during this period and, as such, able to reach large segments of people and explain to them our whole programme and activities. People saw the huge campaigns which our Party led in defence of people against the war burdens and corruption; and our activities to procure essential goods for them, fight against blackmarketeers and hoarders, and corrupt officials; our grow-more-food campaigns, our campaign for relief to Bengal famine victims, etc. Though our 'no-strike' policy and its extreme form of implementation did alienate quite a large proportion of the working class, they at the same time saw us as defending them and participating in their struggles against the exploiting capitalists on innumerable occasions. People saw us campaigning for Hindu-Muslim and Congress-League unity and our work against communal riots, especially during 1946.

It was again during this period, that the building of independent class organisations had become a very notable feature and success. This was especially seen in regard to the Kisan Sabha (Vijayawada and Netrakona sessions), associations for youth, students and progressive writers and cultural organisations. Even in the working class, though our 'no strike' policy had hampered our work and influence, still, compared to the earlier period, the development of independent working class organisations with party cadre actively participating in them, increased considerably.

More than these, our consistent fight against the British Government's brutal repression on our people and on the leaders and workers of the Indian National Congress, and our campaign for their release and for setting up of a National Government had, to a certain extent, mollified the anti-imperialist sentiments of our people, in spite of our often loose flinging of the epithet "fifth-column". People also saw large numbers of party members and supporters being thrown into jails and lathi-charged many a time at many a place, because we were carrying on this campaign for the release of National Congress leaders and for a National Government.

Further, our Party had, to some extent, seen the post-war mass upsurge in our country and corrected its earlier policies and come out in militant support of the mass struggles that were breaking out. Our Party's campaign in support of release of INA prisoners, the RIN revolt and the Bombay working class general strike in support of it, and various hartals in different cities and provinces, our

of release of INA prisoners, the RIN revolt and the Bombay working class general strike in support of it, and various hartals in different cities and provinces, our campaign and active role and participation in the all-India general strike of postal and other government employees, our leading role in various peasant mass upheavals in different states, and especially our part in the state people's struggles against the autocratic native princes throughout India—all these were factors in making people understand our Party's policies and activities, their essential correctness in spite of certain weaknesses during certain periods.

It was this changed policy of the Party that enabled us to plan out, to some extent, more radical and militant mass struggles in Hyderabad State during 1946, and develop them in the postwar atmosphere of mass upsurge. But during the period of the Second World War, with the then understanding and policies at the all-India level, our Party in Hyderabad State could not come out with the clear-cut slogan for abolition of Nizam's rule, for abolition of landlordism and for radical land distribution.

It advanced the slogan of Interim Government in Hyderabad State, based on a joint executive council, 50 per cent of whom would be the representatives of the Ittehad Muslimeen, while the remaining 50 per cent would be of the State Congress (or Andhra Mahasabha, Maharashtra and Kannada Parishads) and transfer of power to the elected representatives after the war. This was on the same lines as the Party's slogan of Congress-League unity for national government for national defence. Of course, the State Congress and other democratic parties were opposed to this. We justified our slogan as a first step to full responsible government, which itself was only an intermediate step for our full demand of the abolition of the Hyderabad State and Nizam's rule and merging its linguistic components with the respective linguistic states of Visalandhra, Samyukta Maharashtra and Aikya Karnataka in a People's Democratic India.

But again, here, too, in the Hyderabad State, and especially, in the Telangana region, what saved our Party and the movement was our intense activity and struggles against forced labour, illegal exactions, forced grain levy collections from the small peasantry, and fight against the high-handed and illegal war fund exactions by corrupt officials. We fought these oppression and levies on the poorer sections, and forced the officers to collect the same in many cases from the richer sections, on whom these burdens were legitimately to fall. It was our activity for relief of the poor and small income groups from war burdens that helped us to maintain our influence and even increase our strength and later launch big mass movements in the postwar situation.

2

The Peasant Upsurge and Communist Party

During the whole period of 1940–1944, the Party and the left cadre of the Andhra Mahasabha carried on agitation and made representations, to see that the *firmans* of the Nizam that favoured the people were put into practice and not sabotaged by the landlords and the corrupt officials. This enabled it to gain a wide popular image and the left wing led by our Party took over the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha.

Since the beginning of 1944, the Andhra Mahasabha under the leadership of the Communist Party conducted many militant struggles against *zamindars* and *deshmukhs*, against the practices of *vetti* (*beggar* – forced labour), against illegal exactions and against evictions of cultivators from their lands.

Below are a few incidents from a narrative by a leader and participant in those struggles, that would give an idea of the mood and militancy of the peasant masses in Telangana at the beginning of the postwar period. Many such struggles carried on in Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts or in other areas can be narrated by the participants but, unfortunately, we do not have, at present, any record of even the important mass struggles of these areas. But the events that are narrated here would illustrate the point.

1. In **Dharmapuram** Jangaon taluka (Nalgonda district), zamindar Pusukuri Raghavarao sent his *goondas* to drive away the tribals from the Lambadi tanda (hamlet of the Lambadi people, a backward tribal community), who had in their possession 80 acres of dry and 25 acres of wet land. The Lambadis, under the leadership of the *Sangham* (the Andhra Mahasabha had come to be lovingly called by the people as *'Sangham'*) took up sticks and slings (catapults used to hurl stones at birds to protect the peasants' crops), planted red flags in their fields and marching up and down, protected their fields, drove away the *goondas* and tilled their lands. It was these Lambadis who had cleared these waste lands and had been cultivating them for decades. The landlord who had all the power in the village in his hands could not drive away the Lambadis and was defeated in his plans.
2. In **Mundrai** village (Jangaon taluka): Lambadis had cleared 30 acres of wet and 40 acres of dry waste lands and were cultivating them and living there. The landlord, Kadari Narasimha Rao, ousted these Lambadis and got the lands

registered in his name. The Lambadis were determined to win back their lands. Under the leadership of the *Sangham* and with the help of people from the surrounding ten villages, about 3,000 people armed with sticks and slings, their only weapons, marched to those fields. The landlords, having become wise after the experience in Dharmapuram, had brought in 75 armed reserve policemen and stationed them there. The neighbouring landlords had gathered and all their *goondas* were collected. Kadari Narasimharao, himself riding a horse with a rifle in his hand, was present on the spot. Thus, the landlords, their *goondas* and the armed police faced the 3,000 people, armed with sticks, and flying their red flags high. Faced with the determined mass of people, the landlords and their *goondas* took protection behind the armed police. Police officer Gurudayal Singh asked his policemen aim their rifles at the people and warned the masses that unless they dispersed he would give orders to shoot. The people on the advice of the *Sangham* leaders decided that they could not face the armed police, and stepped back, though unwillingly. The police arrested 20 Lambadis and *Sangham* leaders, put shackles on them and paraded them in all the villages, to put fright in the minds of the people and then took them to Jangaon where cases were launched against them. The zamindars thought this a victory for themselves and gloated that they crushed the *Sangham* leadership.

3. In **Errapadu** (Suryapet taluka, Nalgonda district): Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy, who had 150,000 acres of land in his name, forced many people from his villages, Chilpakunta, Edavelli, Nootankallu, to leave their lands and had falsely got their lands registered in his name. But people under the leadership of the *Sangham* did not allow this *goondaism*. They stopped giving bribes, *nazaranas* to this big landlord, stopped doing *vetti*. Angered by these acts of the people, Janna Reddy Pratapa Reddy wanted to break their morale by *goondaism* but due to the unity of the people they did not do so, seeing the unity of the people. He threatened them that they would be thrown out from the lands leased to them, and in village Edavelli, he tried this stunt, but the villagers, under the leadership of Gajula Ramachandrayya, a harijan, broke the agricultural implements of the zamindars and gave a good beating to his *goondas*, so that all of them ran for their lives. After that, in all the three villages, cases were framed against 40 villagers and they were dragged from court to court. In the village Errapadu, the deshmukh put up a police camp in his mansion (*gadi* - fort) and was preparing for unleashing *goondaism* on a large scale.

   In another part of Suryapet taluka, the villagers of the Patasuryapet unitedly stood up against the injustices and evictions from their lands by the landlord, Kunduru Laxmikanta Rao, another *deshmukh*, who owned thousands of acres.

4. In **Betavolu** (Huzurnagar taluka): In 1941–1944 after the eighth session of the Andhra Mahasabha held at Chilkuru, the people's struggle against the Betavolu Maktedar, Tadakamalla Seetharamachandra Rao, had reached a new

high. This Betavolu struggle was exemplary in the struggles carried on all over the taluka. People in the villages, Betavolu, Jerripotulagudem, Acharyalagudem, Chennarigudem and Polonigudem under the *maktedar*, united under the leadership of the AMS demanding immediate survey settlement, extension of similar rights as existing in the *ryotwari* areas to their own villages, and stoppage of exploitation. This *maktedar* stooped to such low acts as involving the villagers in false cases, attacking those people while returning from courts, and murdering individual *Sangham* leaders. Venapally Rangayya narrowly escaped such an attack.

People without losing heart at these attacks stood up strongly and unitedly. They decided not to pay taxes to the *maktedar* till the survey settlement was done. At this, the *maktedar* was very much enraged and along with the local rowdies, brought in some Arab mercenaries from Hyderabad, through one Jehangir Khan. He also called in some Sikh toughs. Lots of stories were spread about the prowess of these Arabs and Sikhs-that the Arabs use their daggers very well, the Sikhs throw their wheel from their hair at somebody whose head it cuts off instantaneously and the wheel comes back to the hands of the owner, and so on – all in an attempt to terrorise the people. He made them parade in the villages with swords in their hands, pistols and daggers in their belts and lathis in their hands. Encouraged with this outside help, the local *goondas* started harassing the people.

By then, the people had given up going to courts and offices to get relief and were in a mood to resort to direct action, even a non-tax movement. They also got ready for self-protection from the *goonda* attacks. They took their animals to the *zamindar's* pasture lands and tried to establish their rights on those lands and deprive the *zamindar* of the grazing tax. They drove the animals on to the 600 acres of pastures of this *maktedar* and when his *goondas* attacked them, they repulsed the attack. The *maktedar* with police help, came to the village to collect the dues and get the people's property confiscated. But the women of the village attacked them with brooms in their hands and drove them away. Neither the *maktedar's goondas* her the government help to them proved useful before the united strength of the people. By 1946, the *maktedar* was made to eat humble pie and dared not show his face openly and was forced to move stealthily and in a shamefaced manner. Those 600 acres of land were distributed among the people and even today they are in the possession of the people (1965).

5. In **Bakkavantulagudem** Bhogala Veera Reddy was a big landlord. He ruined many families with the collection of cash interest or interest in grain and other feudal oppression. He used his financial position, police help and his *mali-patel vatan* position in the villages to carry on his exploitation. Nobody dared to oppose him. If the usurious rates of interest in cash or in grain were not paid, then the fertile lands, animals and manure stocks of the peasants were confiscated by him. Whoever opposed him had to face his rowdies.

To face his oppression the people of the village united under the *Sangham* leadership. The *Sangham* came in as on obstruction to Veera Reddy's exploitation, and he decided to take revenge. He let loose his rowdies against the *Sangham* leaders, Irigela Linga Reddy, Balapunuru Bapanayya and others. Using his influence with the police, to supplement his *goondas*, he tried to crush the *Sangham*. He tried to rob the property and the harvest of the people. But the people, in groups, tried to teach the *goondas* a lesson. They stopped him from taking possession of their lands under the pretext of some old loans or dues. They had to carry on this struggle for 3–4 years but ultimately Bhogala Veera Reddy's oppression and exploitation were brought to an end.

6. In **Mallareddygudem** even though it was a *ryotwari* village, there was no limit to the exploitation by the village officers—*patels* and *patwaris*, the village heads and chief accountants. The people of this village raised the banner of the Andhra Mahasabha and put an end to this exploitation. Enraged at this, the village officials tried forcibly to evict the people from 600 acres of *banjar* lands under the pretext that they were illegally cultivating them. The village officials also brought the charge that grain levies were not being paid and they decided to confiscate the harvest. The tehsildar, along with a police party, came and camped in the village. The people were enraged at the idea of the officials confiscating the harvest raised by their hard toil. They took out a procession and exposed the officials' cruel plans.

   In that village of 4,000 population, one-third were Muslims. All were peasants and agricultural labourers. The police under the orders of the village officials, started searching the houses. When they went to Muslim houses, the women came forward and prevented them from searching this house saying that they observed *purdah* and as such would not allow anyone to enter. If they wanted any information, they could allow the *Sangham* leaders to have it, but would not allow the police to search the house. Faced with this determined opposition, the village officials and the district officers though enraged, could not do anything. The unity of the Hindu and Muslim peasants was a nightmare to the bureaucrats and the landlords.

7. **Mellacheruvu** is a *ryotwari* village for namesake. With a population of 6,000, half of the land in this village was in the ownership of big landlords called *banjardars*, even though these lands were, from the beginning, cultivated by the peasants. The *banjardars* had all the rights; lease rights and possession rights. Many a time, the people had risen against these cruel *banjardars*, but every time, they were crushed down. The Andhra Mahasabha took the lead in uniting the people against landlord Chennur Veerabhadra Rao, whose father had very cruelly dealt with the peasants. The people who were the target of his cruelty took revenge and murdered him in broad daylight. After that, Veerabhadra Rao, sensing the mood of the people, came to an understanding with the peasants, giving permanent tenancy to them. This was viewed as a great victory for the people.

With this victory, other people, who had no rights whatsoever and were under the *banjardars*, were enthused. People fleeced by Akkiraju Tirumal Rao, *banjardar* of Venkatapuram, Mellacheruvu hamlet, came under the banner of the AMS. Akkiraju Tirmur Rao was the father of the then district Congress leader, and later a Congress Minister, Sri A. Vasudeva Rao. He, with his riches and the influence with the police, tried to harass the people by putting their animals in the poundage under some pretext or other or setting cases framed against them on false pretexts – that they had cut wood from his forests or had stolen ploughing implements from his fields. But even then the people's will was not broken. They became more stubborn. And seeing the struggles and victories of the people in Choutapalli and Bakkavantulagudem against Bhogala Veera Reddy, and sensing that the movement was going ahead, Tirumal Rao had to climb down. Under AMS leadership, many demands including permanent cultivating rights (*jirayati*) were gained by the people.

After this, the people of the taluka fought for tenancy rights against Anantagiri *deshmukh*, Fatehpuram Keshavarao, against landlords of the Velidanda, Chilukuru villages; in Dorakunta against *jagirdar* Mogalanayak. People also fought against the *vetti* and the police atrocities. Just at this time they saw the victories of the people in the struggles in Suryapet and Jangaon and got very much enthused. The AMS had progressed to be the real people's organisation.

8. **Allipuram** and **Thimmapuram** were *jagir* villages of Anwar Pasha, in the Warangal district. All the people there were tenants under him. They, under the leadership of the AMS, unitedly put forward their demands—reduction of rent rates, permanent ownership *pattas* for the lands, charging reasonable moderate prices, and no eviction. The *jagirdar* kept ten rowdies armed with daggers, swords, lathis in his house and tried to cow down the people by threats. AMS workers, distributing leaflets at that time, were dragged forcibly inside the *jagirdar's* house and tortured.

   People armed with lathis stormed into the house and got them released. The *jagirdar* ran away from the house, brought the police and cases were launched against twenty people.

9. In **Mulakalagudem** village, *Zamindar* Pingali Ranga Reddy who owned thousands of acres of land and was well known all over the Hyderabad state, conspired with others and forcibly took possession of dry and wet lands of Sattayya and his relatives, under the pretext of old loans not cleared. People of that village decided to win back the land under the leadership of the AMS. They also decided to retain the ripened harvest. The neighbouring villagers supported them in this plan. And the people armed with slings drove away the zamindar and his *goondas* far out of the borders of the village, and took possession of the harvest. Afterwards three lorry loads of reserve police were called in; they arrested the leaders and cases were launched against people. But, all the same, the land and the grain remained with the people.

10. In **Nasikallu** Village Vengal Narasimha Reddy was a landlord of **Nasikallu**

village. He owned 2,000 acres of land. He tried to evict peasants from 1,000 acres of land. He started ploughing the land of Gundala Kondayya with the help of *goondas*. Immediately, people collected, armed with lathis and slings, and drove away the *goondas* and the police. They made the *zamindar* take shelter in his house (*gadi*), drove the *goondas* away from the village and chased the police up to their camps and thus protected their lands.

In Jangaon taluk, repression by Visnur Ramachandra Reddy and other landlords had increased. Many false cases were launched against workers and at the same time *goondas* were let loose on the people. In village Kadavendi, even women *goondas* gathered, who tried to obstruct the procession, taken out by the people and abused them in filthy language. But these women *goondas* were chased out by the people. The *zamindar* brought revenue officials to collect the levy grain forcibly from the common peasants. But the people heroically resisted, and in Kadavendi village, 800 bags of grain belonging to the Visnur zamindar were shown to the revenue officials. Demanding the requisition of this grain by the Government, the people went all the way to the then Chief Secretary, Griggson, and prevailed on him. Meanwhile, people stood guard on the granaries lest the grain was shifted to some other place. The *tehsildar* who came for the requisition work connived with the *zamindar* to remove the grain but the people foiled their plans. The people pointed out all the granaries of the *zamindar*. About 6,000 bags of grain were ultimately requisitioned.

The Spark that Set Afire the Telangana Agrarian Revolt

Visnur Ramachandra Reddy, the hated *deshmukh* of Jangaon taluka, in one of his villages, Palakurthi, forcibly tried to take possession of land belonging to a washer woman, Ailamma, who was a staunch supporter and worker of the *Sangham*. He planned to seize the harvest directly from the fields. Just before this, at a public meeting held in that village, he had sent his *goondas* to murder the *Sangham* leaders. But the people had foiled his plans and had badly beaten *goonda* leader, Onamala Venkadu. On this pretext, the landlord arrested 14 of the *Sangham* leaders and lodged a case for attempted murder against them. Involved in this case were the leaders of the *Sangham* from that village, taluka and district. People were scared. Under these circumstances, Visnur Ramachandra Reddy thought that no one would obstruct him from taking possession of Ailamma's lands.

He sent 100 *goondas* and 100 farm servants, men and women, to gather the harvest. Then the Sangham leaders and 28 volunteers, staking their lives, and armed with lathis and shouting slogans attacked the *goondas*. Seeing these volunteers marching with lathis and with fierce determination on their faces, the goondas ran for their lives. No one was left behind. The harvest was gathered and was sent to Ailamma's house. The same night police from Visnur arrived but they dared not touch the harvested grain stored in Ailamma's house. This incident roused the spirit of the people.

Next morning, 6 leaders including Bheemireddi Narasimha Reddy, Chakilam Yadagiri Rao, Nallu Pratapa Reddy, Katkur Ramachandra Reddy were arrested and taken to Visnur police station. At midnight, they were taken with shackles on their hands and feet to the *kutcheri* house, there they were beaten severely, their heads were thrust in the ovens, chilli powder was thrust in their anus, urine was poured into their mouths and many other acts of fascist brutality were committed. But in spite of all this, Ailamma's harvest and lands could not be seized. This victory over Visnur Ramachandra Reddy, the notorious deshmukh, enthused and gave courage to the people of the whole of Telangana. Long after this, the people used to describe this heroic struggle and sing songs about it.

Doddi Komarayya's Martyrdom: July 4, 1946

With the incident mentioned above, the Visnur deshmukh was very much enraged. He took it as a big defeat, the like of which he had not experienced in his life-time. He planned to murder the leaders of Kadavendi village with the help of the police. As a part of this plan, he launched cases on tens of people, got 15 of them arrested. They were later released on bail. In those days, at the slightest notice, people used to gather before the *Sangham* office and discuss their programme. To put a stop to this, he thought that if he could frighten them with legal cases, he could go ahead with his murder plans. The police officers planned out everything with the *zamindar* and his *goondas* and left the village, leaving him a free hand.

It was July 4, 1946. *Goondas* who were drunk, pelted stones at the houses of the leaders. The people, armed with lathis and slings and raising slogans, took out a procession. When it came near the house of the *zamindar*, which was on the main road, *goondas* who had taken shelter in a shed near the *zamindar's* house, fired many shots at the people. The village *Sangham* leader Doddi Komarayya, who was leading the procession died on the spot, hit in the stomach by a bullet. His elder brother, Doddi Mallayya, got hit in the leg and fell down. Mangali Kondayya had his forehead bruised and his brother Narasayya was hurt in the arm.

But the people did not run away in panic. They surrounded the *zamindar's* house, shouting 'blood for blood'. The *goondas* who were in the shed next to the *zamindar's* house, thought that they would not be able to save their lives from the wrath of the people and jumped into the *zamindar's* house, thinking that its high walls would give them protection. But the people had already surrounded it. News was sent to the surrounding villages and they came with dried grass and other fuel to set fire to the house of the *zamindar*. The crowd increased to nearly 2,000. Some had surrounded the *gadi* (bungalow), some were keeping watch outside the village and some were parading the village streets. People were boiling with rage.

Hearing this news, Visnur Ramachandra Reddy's son, Baburao (Jogan Mohan) came from Visnur with 200 *goondas* armed with swords, daggers and pistols.

People who were on the look-out outside the village raised sky-piercing slogans and showering stones from slings rushed towards the *goondas* in masse. Seeing the enraged mass, the *goondas* thought that even firing would not stop the on-rushing people and leaving everything behind, they ran for their lives. People chased them to a distance of three miles. Many goondas were hit with stones. Many of them, while running away, took shelter in Madapuram tanda, but the people there, sensing trouble, drove them away. Anumula Ramreddy, a known *goonda*, was caught hold of at one place and given a thorough beating, knowing that he was one of those who had poured urine in the mouths of Comrades Bheemireddi Narasimha Reddy, C Yadagiri Rao and others. The carts in which the goondas had come were broken to pieces. There was not a single tree left in the *zamindar's* mango grove.

Just at this time, about 60 reserve policemen came to the village. They told the people that they would take action against the goondas and asked them to go home. And when the people dispersed, the police handed over the *goondas* to the *zamindar* safely. On top of this, six cases were launched against Sangham leaders, the charges being that they had attacked the *goondas*, surrounded the *gadi* and tried to set fire to it, and poured urine in the mouth of the goonda leader. But no goonda was arrested nor any case launched against them. But in spite of this, the people were undeterred.

After the post-mortem on the body of Doddi Komarayya, thousands of people took it in a big procession in the villages and cremated it. People from neighbouring villages also took part in this procession. All of them pledged that they would not bend down before the zamindar but would, with renewed energy, work for the *Sangham*. For the next 3 months, they did not allow the *zamindar's* men to come to the fields and do work. After this incident, people always used to sing songs in praise of this immortal hero of theirs.

Komarayya's death and martyrdom set ablaze the pent-up fury of the Telangana peasantry. People rose in all talukas in Nalgonda in masses. The song saluting and praising the immortal hero used to be sung at all meetings and processions, all over the district. People of one village armed with sticks and slings would march to the neighbouring villages and rouse them. They would jointly hold public meetings before the *gadi* (brick-built strong-house of the deshmukh or the landlord), hoist the red flag and declare: "*Sangham* is organised here. No more *vetti*, no more illegal exactions, no evictions". If the landlord or the *deshmukh* did not carry out these orders of the *Sangham* he was socially boycotted. None should work for him in the fields, no barber, no washerman, no house-maid, no domestic servant. These orders of the *Sangham* were seruptously carried out. It was the local leaders who marched in the front, addressed and spread this movement.

People who came from neighbouring villages were fed by the host village without any distinction of caste and religion, and with great pomp, used to get a send-off. The villagers from one village joined the march and proceeded to the next, while some who were in the procession earlier dropped out.

These processions used to stop before the house of the *zamindar* and raise slogans, such as, *zamindari* must be abolished, landlords' oppression and police *zoolum* must be put to an end, to 'levy (compulsory grain procurement), *vetti*, corruption, should be done away with' *'Amarjeevi* (of immortal fame) Doddi Komarayya *Zindabad'*. They used to strike the ground with a thud with the lathis *(gutupalu)* in their hands. This used to shake up the whole village and put fright in the hearts of the traitors. Those traitors used to lock their doors the moment they heard the slogans of these *Gutupala Sangham* as they came to be called. A new special feature of these processions was that along with men, women also took part not only in their own village but in other villages also. Songs which were written on the incident of Ailamma's land struggle attracted the women a lot. For the first time, the problem of land, eviction and *vetti* and forcible grain levies which had become the problems of their lives, were connected with the slogan of abolition of *zamindari*, and that was the main feature of this period.

In this flood of people's movement, the Government could not collect the levy grain. The officers and men who used to collect it were not even allowed to step into the village. So also *vetti* was automatically brought to an end. The deshmukhs and village officials who used to get *vetti* done had either run away from the villages, or even if they remained in the village, they could not raise their head. The movement spread within a few weeks to about 300–400 villages in Nalgonda and neighbouring Warangal (and Khammam) districts.

Government Resorts to Mass Arrests and Police Terror: Party's and Andhra Mahasabha's Directives to Counter it

By the beginning of 1946, our Party's Central Committee reviewed the growing postwar upsurge of the people and decided upon a militant development of the mass struggles, both of the working class and of the peasantry. It came out in favour of an uncompromising struggle against the British and for full independence, it demanded the unconditional withdrawal of all cases against the Indian National Army personnel. In fact, it revised its reformist policies pursued during the war period.

The Congress leadership, released from jail towards the end of the war, was also chalking out its future course of action of mobilising the growing mass discontent against the British, to wrench maximum concessions, in terms of political power from the British. They expelled Communists from the Congress organisation on the false accusation that they had helped the British war effort and sabotaged the Quit India movement. Large-scale detentions of our leading cadres by the Prakasam Ministry in the Madras province under special emergency ordinances took place, and others were forced to go underground.

Our Party, in the course of conducting these mass struggles and developing its own independent political basis from 1942 onwards, found it an absolute necessity to develop a people's volunteer corps to defend its cadre from the attacks of various *goondas* inspired by the Congress as well as by the landlords. In the

Andhra area, by 1945, we had a trained volunteer corps capable of effectively using the ordinary lathi, in organised squad fight.

On that experience, our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha started training people's volunteer corps in the Telangana area, especially in those areas where our cadres were facing determined attacks from *deshmukhs* and *jagirdars' lathials* (paid *goondas* armed with lathis, swords and country-made guns).

It was these trained volunteer corps that came in handy in defending the peasants against the landlords' *goonda* attacks in Nalgonda district in 1945 and 1946. It was this that brought in hundreds and thousands of peasant youth, with lathis and slings, women with chilli powder, stones and boiling water, to defend their hearth and home.

But it was also to be noted that in the struggles of 1945–1946, except towards the latter part of the year, the peasant squads were not trained to take up fire-arms. In the Telangana villages, the Arms Act was not strictly enforced. Large numbers of country-guns—muzzle-loaders—were available and in common use. But the Party instructed the volunteer squads not to take recourse to them, as it would transform the struggle into an entirely new stage and would have all-India repercussions. It was only when under the incessant armed police attacks, the first upsurge of the peasant masses was suppressed and our cadre were forced to scatter, and the police and their landlord agents started combing villages and fields widely, that the Party, with the sanction of the Polit Bureau, allowed our cadre to arm themselves with muzzle-loaders and seize fire-arms (sporting guns, revolvers, and rifles) and allowed them to go in for armed self-defence. It was only then some elementary training in handling small arms, and some elementary field-craft such as, use of explosives for mining and bomb-making, and tactics to attack enemy targets, et cetera, were given to a limited cadre.

As the Nizam Government resorted to mass arrests of the Andhra Mahasabha and Party cadre, and hundreds of Andhra Mahasabha militants — peasants and agricultural labourers and youth—the Party gave a call to defy the summons and arrest warrants, not to get caught by the police, to resist arrests, jump bail, resist confiscation and auction of properties of wanted persons; retreat before a large police force, hover around and come back to the villages to carry on normal activities the moment the police went away. The mood and the preparedness of the masses to take up a militant form of struggle could be gauged by their readiness to avoid arrests and face the cansequences. If the masses are not prepared to defy courts and warrants, fight confiscations and auctions, but want to appear before courts, come out on bail bonds and employ lawyers to defend them, when hundreds and thousands are dragged from one court to another, day after day, it is meaningless to think of any higher form of struggle, or mass militant defiance of authorities.

As the experience of the Telangana movement shows, the masses responded enthusiastically and carried out these instructions in a letter, on a mass scale, developing newer and newer forms of resistance, on their own initiative, to big police raids. Given below are some detailed extracts about some of these

resistances. They show how elementary and spontaneous the mass activity and resistances were at that stage.

Armed Police Raids on Villages and the People's Resistance

In Dharmapuram village, Jangaon taluka, the magistrate with 50 reserve policemen, raided and arrested the local leader, who was leading the struggle of the people there. People from all the surrounding villages, Kadavendi, Dharmapuram, Sitaramapuram, Devaruppula, et cetera nearly 1,500 of them, gathered together. They put barriers before the police van and surrounded them. Raising slogans they demanded the release of their leader. In spite of the police threat to shoot at them, the people did not stir from that place, but stood some yards away from the police. Afterwards the magistrate and the police officers assured the crowd that they would not harm their leader in any way and also made the leader assure them in a way and then only the crowd left that place.

But immediately after this, Section 144 was promulgated in those four villages and it was followed up by day and night raids by the police to arrest some people. Amongst those arrested were Nalla Narasimhulu, Mohan Reddy, Mangali Komarayya, Lingayya, etc. Serious cases were launched against those arrested, and to force them to submit to the police and *deshmukhs*; the police tortured them terribly. They were beaten black and blue, chilli powder was thrust into their anus with a stick, they were spat upon and urine was poured in their mouths. But in spite of such atrocities and tortures, which went on for a week, their morale could not be broken. Their only answer was that they would not give up the *Sangham*, nor resign their membership and would not bow down before the landlords. So they were sent to jail. Just before this, 13 people were also arrested in Suryapet.

After this the Government could not arrest anyone anywhere else. Those who were interned also came out and without getting into the hands of the police, lived amongst the people. The people realised fully by now that unless they protected their party leaders, they would have no one to look to and so they looked after them as the apple of their eye. This idea turned into a movement soon. Whenever the police went to the villagers and asked them about the whereabouts of their *nayakulu* (leaders), the people used to reply that they only knew the lambadi nayaks (the Lambadis are called nayaks and that appellation was added to their names). This was the only answer that was heard from everyone, young and old or children. It became impossible for the Government to trace the party leaders through their agents, as none dared to step into the village and whosoever dared and entered, was given a good beating and driven away. After this, the Government decided to raid the villages suddenly and arrest the leaders whose whereabouts were not known.

Balemula: In the last week of November 1946, the police having come to know that the village Balemula in Suryapet taluka was harbouring party leaders, raided the village to arrest them. They came into the village and surrounded the

house of Comrade Matta Reddy and tried to enter it. Hearing the police arriving, Comrade Matta Reddy got up from his sleep, took up his lathi in his hand, barred their entry into the house and raised the alarm that the police had come. Hearing his shouts, his neighbours, with sticks in their hands shouting slogans, rushed towards the house. A sub-inspector's arm was broken and many constables' heads were broken, too. Two of their rifles were broken. At this, the Circle inspector fired point blank at Matta Reddy who was rushing with his *gutupa* and at others. Matta Reddy was shot in the head and stomach, and shouting *Sangham ki jai*, fell down dead. Three more were seriously injured. Even before the people could recover the dead body, the police put it into the van and sped off. The people tried to obstruct the speeding van but could not do so.

People with grief in their hearts at the death of their leader and injuries to others, were enraged that the enemy had slipped away from their hands, so they kept a close watch, armed with sticks and slings to meet the enemy's onslaught. Faced with the courage and resistance of the people, the police did not dare to raid any other house in that village, and other party leaders in that village were saved.

In the morning every one came to Suryapet, took the dead body after the post-mortem, brought it back to the village in a procession with thousands of people of the neighbouring villages participating in it, and cremated it. People's anger had increased a lot. The revolutionary message of the party leaders to the people after this incident, the exhortation of Matta Reddy's wife to avenge her husband's death, enthused the people very much and put a new spirit in them. They pledged at the cremation ground that they would carry on the work of the martyr and would destroy the Nizam and *zamindari* and police repression.

Another important leader of that area, Comrade Ananta Reddy, was killed in this raid. But I could not get details of his heroic life and exploits.

People's Preparations

Patasuryapet (Suryapet taluka), Devaruppula (Jangaon taluka), Mallareddygudem (Huzurnagar taluka) were expected to be the next targets of big police raids. When this news reached the people, they immediately decided that these centres must be protected. The people from neighbouring villages used to come to these places and along with the local people, keep watch the whole night and go away in the morning. During day time, cultivation work and other jobs of the *Sangham*, and at night, keeping watch, used to be their daily routine.

One thing must be understood here—that the party cadre had no idea of military raids, their weapons, their strength and the result of these raids. Armed with lathis and slings and one's body wrapped in gunny cloth, one could face the rifle shots—this was the idea entertained by local cadres. The bullet would not penetrate but would get deflected by the sock cloth. Besides this naive belief, they thought shouting slogans would scare away the military. Each one had a stick, and a sling to throw stones, which was quite a strong instrument to scare

away the birds but useless against the rifles of the armed police. Heaps of stones were collected in the villages. In the above-mentioned villages, these preparations went on in full swing. Every man and woman in every house pledged to dedicate himself or herself to the fight. Every street had heaps of stones, every house had stones. Besides, chilli powder, pounding sticks, et cetera, were kept at hand. Day and night, on all sides of the villages, watch was kept. A big drum was put in the centre of the village at the sound of which everyone, wherever he might be, was to rush in and join the battle-field with his weapons. This drum-beating could be heard in the neighbouring villages also. Arrangements for news-carrying were made perfect. There were couriers who would get the news of the police and relay it to other villages. The village cadre used to carry out every detailed direction of the taluka and district leaders. That was the mood, spirit, discipline and confidence that the people had then.

Another important thing was that there were no enemy agents in the villages. Either they had run away or had submitted to the will of the people. And practically all the families participated in these struggles.

Raid on Patasuryapet

One night, at about 3 a.m., the military stopped their lorries outside the village and armed with rifles, brenguns and other weapons, stealthily and soundlessly, marched in and surrounded the village a furlong away from its outskirts. On the main roads, further away from the village, another military cordon was also laid. They took all precautions so that the people should not get scent of their presence in the village till morning. People who were going about were stopped on the way and were made to sit down with the military silently. In the morning, all along the outskirts of the village, the military was seen spread out. The drum was beaten for a long time, 'Sangham ki jai' slogans rent the air. Slings were used in all directions; their stones hit the iron helmets of the military with a thud and then the military went back a little out of reach of the slings. People were very much enthused to see this and pushing forward, pelted more stones amidst the din of slogans. This went on for quite some time. By this time, the people had come out of their village. A special feature of this fight was that women were by the side of the men folk, handing over stones for their slings.

The military officer, Collector and the local landlords' men announced many a time that if the people put down their weapons and handed over their leaders, no harm would come to the people. But the people were in no mood to listen and went on attacking. All this time, the news of the military raid spread like lightning to the neighbouring villages and people wherever they were took up all the weapons at hand and in groups came running and rushing onwards. The military stopped all the people coming from all directions and prevented them from approaching the village.

Along with the military, there were *patels, patwaris,* and landlords' men who again and again tried to pacify the people as well as threaten them, that if they

did not put down their weapons then the military would use their rifles and bren-guns, which could shoot at a target even a mile off and all of them would die. But the people were not frightened. They said that the Government and landlords' men had ruined them completely and no one would trust them any more. As long as they had their slings in their hands, the bullets would not do them any harm. The talks went on for quite a long time with no effect; the people standing fast, shouting slogans.

People coming from neighbouring villages swelled the gathering to thousands. But the military did not allow them to approach the village. Each group was separated from the other on the main roads. People formed a ring on the farther side of the military. Those who had started from 15-20 miles were still on their way. There was no food for the people and the military. Seeing that the people would not give in, the military on the orders of the officers, moved towards the village people and on the mass on the far side.

When the people saw the military moving, they again showered stones and fired their country rifles. The military also fired. Comrades Narasayya of Patasuryapet and Bhikshamayya of Patarlapadu died and three others were injured. When people when saw the shooting of rifle done by it and the sound they made, the instantaneous death and injuries they to others, realised that their slings would have no effect on the military with its modern weapons, and they dispersed. Many men and women in the village were arrested and tortured horribly. Many outside villagers who had come in the night to help these villagers were also amongst those arrested. A large number of people were arrested and sent to different jails. There were men and women, old and young people among those arrested.

On the same day, Balemula was again raided by hundreds of military personnels. After a short fight, nearly 200 were arrested and sent to different jails.

Raids on Devaruppula

The military in full gear surrounded the village Devaruppula in the early morning at 4 a.m. Like in Patasuryapet, they did not allow the outside people to come in and the resistance of the people was repeated as in Patasuryapet. Seeing that everyone including men, women, old and young were in the fight and some military people were getting injured by the stones, on the orders of the officer, the military rushed towards the people and fired at them. Mandadi Somireddi (Kadavendi) and another (from Sitaramapuram) died instantaneously. Many were injured and the people got scattered. The military got hold of whomsoever they could lay their hands on and tortured them horribly. Four hundred people were arrested and sent to various jails.

Next day, many people even from far-off places came to this village. With their help those villagers who had escaped arrest took out a procession and held a meeting. After the meeting, people who had come from outside, wanted to

attack the military camp at Mundrai. Leaders explained to them how futile such an attempt would be when the military was fully armed with modern weapons and the people had no weapons at all. But without listening to their leaders, people from Padisala, Kondur, Tatipamula villages, about a thousand of them, marched towards Mundrai, shouting slogans. But the military chased them away.

Mallareddygudem: This village on the banks of the Krishna in Huzurnagar taluka was the centre for party activities. This area of fertile black soil, though producing commercial crops, had no transport routes and under the *patel* and *patwari* oppression, the people were very backward in all respects. With the AMS agitation, their exploitation was stopped and people were enthused. At that time, Jangaon taluka struggles were at their peak. People were learning lessons from those struggles. They had learnt from the landlords' *goonda* attacks, Nizam's army raids and Komarayya's murder that they must protect their leadership. People of Mallareddygudem learnt self-defence. Men and women got physically and mentally prepared to fight the *goondas* if they attacked individually or in groups. This village had rocky soil. It had houses built with stones and mud. In self-defence, people had collected heaps of stones on the upper storey of their houses. Everyone decided to keep small and big sticks ready, pots full of chilli powder, etc. The people who were once helpless before landlords' *goondas* and the police now united together in strength and prepared themselves for self-defence. On December 29, 1946, ten to twelve lorries of military arrived in Huzurnagar.

Directions were sent to the people that when military raids the villages, the people should avoid collision with them and slip away. But the local leaders had not given these directions to the people so there was no change in the people's tactics of fighting. They used to keep watch at night and in the early morning when they saw the military approaching the village, attack signals were given and instead of going to their normal work, people got ready for an attack. Some were to be on the entrance roads, some in bylanes, some on the upper storeys of the houses and some were to carry news out and bring in news. Thus each one was busy with his own work. The whole village was astir. It was surrounded by *jowar* (millet) fields so thickly grown that it was impossible to see the movements or the strength of the military from the village. Large numbers of military and armed persons had taken their positions around the village, shielded by the jowar fields. Both sides were quite alert.

The village leadership had gone out of the village for the night as a precautionary measure. Recognising the signals, they wanted to return but seeing the military spread all around the village, they did not come in. There was no link between the leadership and the people who did not wait for their leaders but got ready for self-protection. The day was breaking. Resistance forces saw the movements of the military. From all sides, they pelted stones on the military, simultaneously. The stones hit the helmets of the military. They retreated to a little distance. The resistance forces moved forward and taking cover behind the stone walls, again pelted stones at the military. Volunteers who were tired, were replaced by others. Old people and children, and women were supplying stones

and slings to their menfolk. Outside the village, the Collector and military officers were addressing the people using mikes, which was not heard in the din of battle and the people were not in a mood to listen also. They were also inspired the resistance. Buttermilk was supplied to all. Each one was resting in turn and again going into action.

Day was advancing but there was no end to the fight. The military officers appealed to the people to stop the fight for a while and send three or four of their elders to talk and listen to what the officers had to say. If they did not agree, they would go back. They said that all the others should be where they were. At this a discussion arose as to why the talks should not be held. They appointed the sole leader of this fight, Errabolu Appireddi, to go as their representative. He had to go a hundred yards further and talk to the officers. The fight was to be stopped on the north side, but on all other sides, it was to continue. It was ten o'clock. Four persons along with Appireddi started out. Hardly had they gone 50 yards when the military shot at them point blank. Comrade Appireddi fell on the spot. Another person who was sitting on the verandah of the house opposite got hit in the stomach and died. Just at this time, the military also fired at the volunteers who were fighting on the south side of the village. One woman who was handing over stones to her husband got shot and died. Many more were injured. This incident of Appireddi and three others dying of bullet wounds and many more getting injured, came so unexpectedly that the people got nervous. The military came rushing forward, resistance stopped.

The military moved in groups and committed atrocities. Those who were caught were beaten up, tied up with ropes and taken along. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. they had a free hand and then carried the men and women in their lorries. But before putting them in the lorries, they separated the Muslims amongst the people and left them behind, even though they were leading the fight. This surprised the Muslims and they also wanted to get into the lorries along with their other brethren, but no heed was paid to them. The military put nearly 400 non-Muslims in the lorries and drove away. The whole village was in a devastated state. There was no one to give courage to the remaining people. The Muslims who were left behind were trying to console the bereaved families, when the anti-people elements in the village spread the rumour that this was the doing of the Muslims and the military was still in their houses. This gave rise to doubts in the minds of the innocent people and thinking that it might be true, they sent word to the leaders who were outside the village, not to enter just at that time, but await further news. The people's upsurge was temporarily disrupted, the cadre was scattered under severe repression.

Aftermath of the Raids

The military raids did not stop there. The whole district was handed over to the military. Many military camps were established in many villages. The raids went on for days and nights and people were harassed. Pressure was brought

on people to trace out the village *Sangham* committee members, volunteer corps leaders and other chief leaders of the *Sangham*. The people used to be rounded up and taken along with the military for searching the fields, wells, fences, shrubs and all other possible places. At the same time, the people were asked to pay the grain levy, and give in writing that they would hand over their leaders and resign from the *Sangham*. The Nizam's son Mukkaram Jah, visited many taluka centres and donated clothes to many people. A big boosting propaganda was carried on that the king was like a father to the people and had come to enquire about the welfare of the people, and thus this visit of the Nizam's son was used as tactics to drive a wedge between the *Sangham* and the people. Military raids went on for weeks and months. People stood these hardships without losing courage. During the night the men used to live scattered all over the fields, outside the village. Women in groups of 15 and 20 used to sleep together so as to be able to protect their honour.

Patels, patwaris and *deshmukhs* who had left the villages and gone to the towns, returned taking advantage of these raids. Before they were subdued under the people's revolt but now they raised their head and started pointing out the leaders amongst them to the military and getting them harassed.

Some elders in the villages started discouraging the people saying that they would not be able to face the military, and advised them to come to terms with them. And because it was dinned into their ears day and night that if they resigned from the *Sangham*, the military raids would step and no harm would come to any one of them, some agreed to resign, even though they had all love for their *Sangham*. But after these resignations, the military took the people along with them everywhere in search of the leaders of the *Sangham* and the Communist Party.

In Suryapet taluka, Kandagatla, Aruvapalli, Urlugonda, Ragipadu and Kotapadu hillocks were searched by bringing thousands of people from the surrounding 5–6 villages and forcing them to do this job with the military standing by. Grain levy was procured by compulsion from the villagers. Even the land revenue was forcibly collected before the scheduled time. A sort of paralysis, sullen submission, spread over the people's movement. But even then, their love for the *Sangham* and leaders, and the urge to protect them, was never vanquished. They used to protect the leaders, feed them, but would ask them to go away for a while to some other area, as they would come to harm if they were seen by the traitors in the village. They would plead their helplessness, in the face of the terrific police repression.

The village traitors, getting emboldened, started taking the villagers along with them to look for the leaders all over the place, even without the help of the military. The people who were forced to do this dirty job under terror, used to protect their leaders even in these searches, by not reporting even if they were seen or by sending word ahead to them of such searches. This zeal of the people obtained the release of the Epuru village leader when he was arrested and was being taken to the nearest camp at Bopparam.

However, quite a number of local and village leaders were arrested and the remaining could not be given protection. The leader of Patasuryapet was arrested on the Kandagatla hillock. Those arrested used to be tortured horribly by the military, the village officers, landlords and their *goonda* gangs. In Jangaon taluka, Narmeta village, one village leader was arrested and badly beaten up. In the same area, another worker was beaten till he lost consciousness. Devaruppula village was completely looted by the *goondas* of the Visnur landlord. Later on, these anti-people elements by themselves started searching for the leaders even without any other help. These conditions prevailed till May 1947, when the people found it necessary to control the activities of the traitors, the *goondas* and other anti-people elements, who were emboldened by the military camps in the villages.

In Patasuryapet village in Suryapet taluka, where one leader was arrested on the Kandagatla hillock, the police, the *patel* and the landlord were given a good beating and their arms and legs were broken. Similarly, the Chandupatla landlord, a big traitor, along with his goondas who had become notorious in Kothagudem, were dragged out of the cart in which they were travelling and were given a good beating. People also beat up the *goondas* of Jannareddy Pratap Reddy at Chilpakunta, goondas of Thimmapuram, the landlords of Kothagudem and Ravipadu. In Kadavendi village (Jangoan taluka), the Visnur deshmukh's *goondas*, when trying to loot the houses, were resisted by people armed with knives, lathis and other weapons and were not allowed to raise their head. In Seetaramapuram, a person who was the police *patel*, and who had three policemen to protect his house, was terrorising the people. He lost his life at the hands of the people. The protecting police left everything behind and ran away. In Ramannapet taluka, the Pallerla deshmukh, a hated oppressor, was killed by the people. In Nalgonda taluka, Addagudur village, three C. I. D. men who had come in disguise, were beaten up and let off with a warning that if they or any of their lot dared to enter the village, they would not leave the place alive.

In Huzurnagar taluka, there was no limit to the terrorisation practised by the anti-people elements. Landlords of Velidanda, Dorakunta, Bakkamantulagudem, Fathepuram villages vied with each other in these acts. Bhogala Veerareddy who was the landlord of Bakkamantulagudem in Choutapalli area and his brother Pichireddy actually participated in the searches in the forests for the *Sangham* leaders and also insulted Saidireddy – the wife of the village leader. The landlords had their own fire-arms. But even then, people decided to go to their houses with lathis, knives and beat them to death and teach them a lesson. The people surrounded the house of the landlord and entered the house of the *goonda* leader Bhogala Veerareddy. He tried to resist them with his rifle, but his rifle was broken by lathi blows. The landlord's hands and legs were broken. When his brother, Pichireddy came with a lathi and fell on the volunteers who were keeping guard, they beat back the attack and in the fight he got a blow on the head and died on the spot.

By the morning, this news had spread all over the taluka. All the landlords and their *goondas* took all their valuables with them and ran away to taluka

centres. Reports of the Chilukuri Deshmukh, Jupudi Narasimha Rao, being waylaid and thrashed, while returning from the police station, harijan agricultural labourers' resistance to the *jagirdar* of Dorakunta and destruction of his property by them, had rekindled a new spirit and brought in a favourable atmosphere for the *Sangham* in the taluka.

An important change took place in the conditions of the whole of Nalgonda district due to these actions against the traitors and the landlords, *goondas* and other anti-people elements. The local people started writing posters and leaflets, warning the village anti-social elements, and pasting them on the walls and doors of houses of these elements in particular. In some places the farm servants who worked in the houses, used to leave these leaflets on the tables, cots, et cetera, in the landlords' houses. In many places, these landlords were given a beating by people in disguise. But while doing all this, each one was carrying on his daily work without giving any inkling to the enemy about their role in these acts.

Leaflets threatening the police used to be thrown into the police camps also. These leaflets used to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. Due to this, in many places the enemy left and shifted to the towns. They would not move about without protection. Some anti-social elements gave up their *goondaism* and begging the people, stayed on in the village itself. The search for *Sangham* leaders stopped. People got the feeling that the *Sangham* was back amongst them.

Some Lessons about this Phase of the Movement

One patent fact that emerges from the events of 1945 and 1946 is that our Party had not understood the depth of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses in the immediate postwar situation. Its reformist understanding and functioning during the war period made it difficult for it to foresee these developments and prepare itself and the people's organisation for them.

It is true that it was only our Party that came out with the slogan of people's raj in Visalandhra, advocated dissolution of Hyderabad state and merging it in its neighbouring linguistic areas. It traced out a vision of what people's raj in Visalandhra, in an independent India, would be like, in various sectors. It came out with an anti-feudal, democratic agrarian programme in the Andhra State Committee election pamphlet, *Prajarajyam* in *Vishalandhra*. This was sold in large numbers, 20,000 copies at that time. But all this was envisaged as a slow process.

Even when our Party took to developing militant mass struggles during the second half of 1946, organised seizure of waste lands and lands under *zamindari* and feudal landlords illegal possession in the Andhra area, it withdrew them, faced with the Congress Ministry's repression.

The Party in the Madras province including the Andhra area was virtually under a ban. A large number of leaders were under detention or had gone underground during the first few months of 1947, under the *Prakasam* ordinance. But on the eve of the transfer of power on August 15, 1947, all of them were

released or came out. The line of conducting militant mass struggles went into the background and the Party was involved in a controversy whether to extend all-out support to the Nehru Government of national independence, in the name of defeating the British imperialist conspiracies and the narrow Vallabhbhai clique, who were out to undermine the newly won independence.

With the advent of independence, whatever militant movements were there in erstwhile British India, slowed down—mostly because the people were expecting big steps from the Congress Government headed by Nehru, and that it would be able to solve their problems as well, and partly because of the inability of our Party to give proper lead to the masses, being weak and isolated from the rest of the democratic parties and groups.

It was only in the Hyderabad and Travancore States, which refused to join the Indian Union that the people's discontent and struggles were further developed, to a certain extent encouraged and supported by the Indian National Congress and the Indian Government. In many of the other states, which Vallabhbhai Patel brought into the Indian Union, assuring them big privy purses and safeguarding their privileges, the States people's movements were also toned down and withdrawn. It was the Vayalar and Punnapra struggle under the leadership of our Party against the Travancore Maharaja and his Dewan, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, and the Telangana struggle in the Hyderabad state, again led by our Party, that gave vent to the postwar discontent, and orientation to an agrarian revolt.

If we had had a correct revolutionary grasp of the things that were shaping up and had developed our Party on correct Marxist-Leninist principles, taking Telangana itself, we would have trained our cadre and the people for launching vigorous attacks on the whole feudal system, seized the illegally begotten land from the landlords as well as the surplus land from them, as we had to do later, groping hesitantly, step by step. We would have trained our cadre and militants not only with lathi defence but even for armed defence. We would not have hesitated for such a long time in allowing our cadre to seize and use even the country guns, which resulted in total dislocation and disruption of the first upsurge.

But in spite of our hesitation, the Telangana people's discontent and upsurge was so deep and great, that by their spontaneous activity, of course guided by our Party, with all its limitations—

1. They put an end to *vetti* (forced labour), illegal exactions, and compulsory grain levies and started to reoccupy the lands seized earlier by the landlords and *deshmukhs*. The movement became one for abolishing feudal landlordism and even the Nizam rule. The mass character and sweep of this movement were evident from the fact that it spread within a few weeks to hundreds of villages.
2. People who started resisting the landlords' armed *goonda* attacks and beat them back, got ready to face later the armed police, and then even the military forces of the Nizam.

3. People of one village rushing to the help of neighbouring villages under police attack.
4. The women joining their menfolk, in the actual resistance, in every manner possible.
5. The *Sangham* became their guide and leader and helped to solve all their problems, including the disputes between husbands and wives; and a mass militant cultural upsurge of militant songs and folk arts took place.

It was this depth of the mass discontent and upsurge that in the special and peculiar favourable conditions in Hyderabad State that again in August 1947, when the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union, it surged forward, even after the bitter blows it had received earlier.

It was to the credit of our Party, the Andhra unit, that it guided the Telangana anti-feudal and anti-Nizam struggle from 1940 to 1946 and converted the Andhra Mahasabha into a united mass organisation and a front for all anti-Nizam people's forces. It won the confidence of the people, became the leader of this front and organisation; it popularised the struggle of the Telangana people, the idea of Vishalandhra, mobilised wide-scale support to the fighting Telangana peasantry. It provided shelter and help to the cadre and people under the Nizam's attacks, in the coastal areas. It made the coastal districts the rear of this Telangana people's movement. For this, the Party was under attack from the Congress Government even during the first half of 1947. Later, after the short period of legality following independence, it was once again banned and attacked on January 30, 1948. All this period the Party helped to regroup the scattered movement in Telangana and was able to reorientate it on proper lines—first in joining with the State Congress leaders in the struggle for merging the state in the Indian Union and giving it a mass character, then developing it into the anti-feudal and anti-Nizam agrarian revolt and later into the liberation struggle against Nizam's rule. It shook the very foundations of Nizam's rule. As the anti-feudal agrarian waves of revolt went spreading the big bourgeois-led bourgeois-landlord Government of independent India, under the leadership of the Congress and Nehru, rushed their armed forces, to suppress the Telangana agrarian revolt, stop it from spreading further and buttress their own class rule in Hyderabad State as well as in the rest of India.

About these aspects, we will try to trace the developments in the succeeding chapters.

3

Armed Resistance Movement Against Nizam and Razakars

Distribution of Land, Establishment of People's Rule–15th August 1947 to 13th September 1948

The Party and the Andhra Mahasabha were busy during the first four months of 1947, regrouping the scattered Party and AMS organisation, under the heavy blows of the Nizam's repression. The Party was also under ban and attack in the Andhra area. Yet, Guntur, Krishna and Godavari had been the protective base for the Telangana fighters.

On August 15, 1947, power was transferred from British imperialism to the bourgeois-landlord Congress. The Nizam declared that he would not join the Indian Union but would remain independent (Azad Hyderabad). The Indian National Congress was forced to launch a satyagraha struggle in the Hyderabad State to bring pressure on the Nizam Nawab to accede to the Indian Union.

This gave us a very good opportunity and new possibilities of developing the Telangana people's struggles. We joined hands with the State Congress in its struggle for the merger of the state with the Indian Union. Since our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha were the major political force is with great political and mass influence and organisation, especially because of the struggles of 1944–1946, we had a decisive voice in this movement.

The people, all sections, in the Andhra areas, gave massive support to this state people's movement. We could collect Rs 20,000 in two or three days, in just the one town of Vijayawada, for providing arms for fighting the *Razakars* and the Nizam.

Joint meetings and demonstrations were held with the national and red flags fluttering together. Whatever programme the Congress chalked out, we made it a huge mass affair, drawing thousands of people to participate in them. If the Congress called for a demonstration or picketing by a limited number of *satyagrahis*, we used to make it a huge mass demonstration or mass picketing.

When the Congress gave the call for boycotting colleges and schools and courts, we again made it a mass affair. We recruited a large number of students into our volunteer squads and the Andhra Mahasabha organisation. It was this influx of students that helped the movement grow by leaps and bounds; many

of them, later on, developed themselves as local and area leaders of both the mass organisation and of the guerrilla organisation.

The Congress gave the slogan of breaking the customs barriers between the Indian Union and Nizam's territory, resignation of *patels* and *patwaris*. Our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha converted it into that of destroying all the records of these posts.

The Congress gave a call for cutting toddy-yielding sheaths of palm and date trees, and called for the boycott of toddy shops to deprive the Nizam state of one of its main sources of revenue, as also because of its own fad for prohibition. We converted it for days into large-scale destruction of date and palmyra trees and also physically preventing the toddy-toppers from making toddy. But soon we realised that the toddy-tappers, a large percentage of the rural poor, were losing by this programme their occupation and livelihood, and were turning hostile. The Party corrected this error, changed its slogan and gave a call, 'Tap the toddy, give it clean and cheap to the people. But do not pay taxes'. This went to the hearts of the people. Let me add, here itself, that the Party banned drinking toddy by our guerrilla squad members and political organisers, even at the village level. This was strictly observed.

The Congress gave the slogan of the merger of the state with the Indian Union. At the same time we advocated dissolution of the state, merging its linguistic components into the respective linguistic areas and the formation of united linguistic states in an Indian people's state, and the abolition of the Nizam's rule.

The whole national sentiment was in favour of this movement. The bourgeois-landlord Government the of independent India, headed by the big bourgeoisie, also wanted Hyderabad's merger. All the democratic forces of the whole of India were in favour, because they wanted that the stooge and supporter of British imperialism, the Nizam Nawab, should be thrown out; the whole Hindu population wanted the Muslim feudal Nawab's rule to go; the three linguistic nationalities wanted liberation because of their desire to merge with their own linguistic areas, so that they could develop their language and culture; the growing bourgeoisie, the capitalist landlord and the rich peasantry also wanted Nizam's autocracy and its feudal set-up to go and to be replaced by a 'democratic and responsible Government as part of India' for their own economic and political development; the toiling peasant, the rural poor wanted the wholesale abolition of feudal landlord exploitation, of *vetti* (begar), of forced labour, illegal exactions, of forced grain levy, and wanted land for cultivation. The workers wanted employment and better wages. All currents joined in this all-in anti-Nizam struggle, for a democratic regime, as a component of the Indian Union. A progressive section of the Muslims also joined the movement.

Our Agrarian Programme

Our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha did not confine themselves to transforming

the items of the Congress programme into action, with large-scale mass participation. We actively turned it into a definite anti-feudal agrarian revolt.

- We led the people to stop all kinds of forced labour and illegal exactions.
- We encouraged people to refuse to deliver the forced grain levies.
- We led the people not only to retain the lands they were cultivating on lease from the landlords, but also to recover all the lands illegally seized by the landlords. Reduction in rent and later total non-payment of rents to the bigger landlords and to the enemies of the people, was also enforced.
- Occupation and cultivation of waste lands of the Government and of the big landlords were initiated.
- We started seizing the grain stocks of the hated landlords, and started distributing them to the needy rural poor.
- Along with the records of *patels* and *patwaris*, we burnt the records of the landlords, the records of moneylenders, and all promissory notes and bonds executed in their favour.
- And, finally, within a few months, the seizure of the surplus lands of the landlords and their distribution to the poor peasantry was accomplished, along with drought cattle and agricultural implements. The ceilings started with 500 acres, then by stages were reduced to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet, as the movement developed, and as the urgency to meet the poor peasants demand for land grew and as experience got enriched.

The movement became a wide-spread people's movement. The same enthusiasm, as in the days of Devaruppula, Patasuryapet, Balemula and Mallareddigudem was witnessed. But the sweep was deeper and statewide. People started feeling that once again '*Guttapalu Sangham*' (i.e., *lathi sangham*) was on the march, but this time it was not only lathis, but whatever fire-arms that could be obtained; people, all groups, the Congress, the Communist and Andhra Mahasabha squads were arming themselves.

The Nizam's rule was shaking from its foundations. He had resorted to large-scale terror. He organised the *Razakars* under the leadership of Kasim Razvi, of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. He let them loose, with full army backing, on the villagers; looting, arson, torture, murder and rape stalked the land. The people had to defend themselves and fight back, with whatever weapons they could lay hands on, with whatever organisation they could muster.

Under this heavy terror, a large number of persons, especially from the rich top sections, left for the Union territory for protection. Congress satyagraha camps and squads also left the area and migrated to the Indian Union territory and established their armed camps on the borders, and from there they started counter-raids. It was only the Communist and Andhra Mahasabha squads that could continue to function inside the state and fight back the *Razakar* and Nizam terror.

The cooperation that had existed in the initial stages of the merger movement between the Congress and the Andhra Mahasabha cadre evaporated within a few

weeks. The sweep of the anti feudal and anti-landlord movement and the mass character of the anti-Nizam movement that was taking shape, cooled the ardour of the Congress leadership. Further, with their having no stomach for such a radical programme, with no roots among the toiling people, their squads degenerated into raiding and launching attacks against the people, and in support of the exploiting landlords.

Our squads had to act and disarm many of these Congress squads. Quite a large number of militant and honest members of these Congress squads joined us later and fought together with us.

It is a matter of historical record that the Indian Government drewup a stand-still agreement with the Nizam, went on supplying the Nizam's forces with arms and ammunition, while the Nizam Government and its police and army personnel went on with their marauding raids on the people and on the freedom fighters in the state. Once, when the Nizam police raided and seized the wounded fighters on their way from the Munagala enclave to Vijayawada, the Government of India for long did not take steps to get them released or prevent such actions being repeated.

The anti-Razakar, anti-Nizam armed struggle developed in the Telangana area rapidly; village squads with about 10,000 members and regular guerrilla squads with more than 2,000 members were formed; in innumerable struggles and heroic deeds, nearly 2,000 militants, fighters and leaders laid down their lives but took a heavy toll of the Nizam's armed personnel, police agents, *Razakars*, landlords and their *goondas*; they drove them away from villages; 3,000 villages were administered by village panch committees or *gram rajyams*; land distribution, education and health, and all rural services were organised by these fighting people's committees.

Let the chronicler, here, describe this heroic saga of the Telangana people's struggle, of the Telangana heroes and the Telangana martyrs.

The Chronicler's Story

The New Upsurge

Thousands of people from 10 to 15 villages coming together and marching to other villages with their lathis, hoisting national and red flags, breaking open the grain stocks of the landlords and distributing it to the people, became a common sight. In Miryalagudem taluka, the Tadakamalla landlord's paddy stocks were surrounded by 3,000 people, taken charge of and 400 bags of paddy distributed amongst the people.

In Huzurnagar, Suryapet villagers, about 3,000 in number, took out a victory march to Anantaram, via Annaram, Potlapadu. After their usual programme, they broke open the stores of the landlord and distributed the grains. In short, the lathi sangham was named as the 'Victory March Sangham' (*Jaitra Yatra Sangham*).

Razakar Formation and Raids

The *Razakar* army was formed under the leadership of Kasim Razvi, the leader of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, with the slogans that 'Azad Hyderabad' was a Muslim empire; in the Asafjahi reign every Muslim was a ruler; to protect this Government was god's command, and so to get into the Razakar army and oppose the Hindus was every Muslim's sacred duty.

Razakars who had their centres in cities and towns used to raid the villages, loot the people, pull down the national and red flags. They had spears, *jambias*, swords, muzzle-loaders and rifles with them whenever they made these raids. One thing must be noted here that just as in the earlier period, the people both Hindus and Muslims, had fought in the villages against landlords unitedly, so also they fought shoulder to shoulder against the Razakars, without falling prey to religious fanaticism.

Struggles in Tungathurthi, Aleru, Nomula and Paradala

The people who had fought against the *zamindars* and the Government but who were suppressed earlier, came out in the resistance movement against the *Razakars*, once again with great enthusiasm, even though they had no weapons except lathis and spears.

The report that about 50 *Razakars* from Suryapet had come to Ekkaram village, reached Balemula, Kandagatla, Thimmapuram, Patasuryapet and other villages. People from these villages, about 3,000 and more, shouting slogans and armed with slings, rushed to Ekkaram, and faced the *Razakars* and tried to snatch away their arms. The *Razakars*, giving up their plan of looting the village, had to run away in spite of their modern weapons, to save their lives.

Revenue officials, along with *Razakars*, went to Kontapalli and Pinavoora villages to collect land revenue. People surrounded them and killed them.

In the village of Pamulapadu, Miryalagudem taluka, the people drove the landlord Lakshma Reddy out of the village. When he tried to re-enter it, with police help, the people fought back with lathis and spears in hand. The police could not enter the village for three days, till reinforcements came.

These incidents showed the high pitch of the people's hatred against Nizam's officials and landlords and their mood to resist and fight back.

The Tungathurthi police station, in Suryapet taluka, was surrounded by people from Ganugabanda, Vempati and other villages. People raised slogans and pelted stones with slings and rushed at the police. The police fired round after round. In this attack, Comrade Mallipaka Mysayya of Karivirala village, who was leading and giving slogans, fell down dead and two more were injured. People retreated, taking away with them, the dead and the wounded.

In Kolanupaka (Bhongir taluka), the *jagirdar* had put up a big *razakar* camp, and looted the people, when on November 28, 1947, about 6,000 people gathered to raid this camp. But they gave up the plan when they found that the *jagirdar*

was on the alert with more men and arms. They marched to other villages in groups, hoisting flags. Three thousand went to Aleru under the leadership of Asireddi Narasimhareddi on November 29, 1947, at 6 a.m., and hoisted flags in many places and began marching in procession. The armed police barred their way with rifles. The people surged forward, the police showered bullets on them. Comrade Asireddi Narasimha Reddy, who was leading the procession, was hit in the thigh and two other people died on the spot, 80 were injured out of whom three died in the Bhongir hospital. Fourteen had their bones broken. There were pools of blood in the whole area. The names of the dead are: Pusloji Veerayya, Chinnam Komarayya, Marpu Pullayya and Birru Narayana of Gundlagudem village, Elagandula Laxminarasayya of Tunagathurthi village.

Twenty *Razakars* and armed police from Nakrekallu camp raided Nomula village in Nalgonda taluka. About 400 people of Nomula and Kodaparti villages went after them with lathis and slings and chased them with battle-cries of 'Communist Party ki jai', and 'Sangham ki jai'. The *Razakars* and police fired at the people frantically. Kathari Somayya, Matsa Veeramallu (both 50 years of age), and Venkayya and Veerayya (two youths) lost their lives.

Many were injured. Of these, two more died. Pannala Papayya, who had his intestines cut open, tied up his upper cloth on to his stomach and courageously stood up. After this firing, the people retreated, carrying the dead and the wounded.

The Razakars and the police from the Katanguru camp who raided Paradala village were chased far from the village by 300 people armed with lathis and slings. But the police took cover and fired at the people. Four died on the spot.

The police camp in Ravulapenta in Miryalagudem taluka was the centre for raids on the nearby villages. The enraged people from the villages wanted to destroy the camp and hoist the red flag. They gathered together in thousands, surrounded the camp village, but the unarmed people became the targets of police firing and were forced to scatter.

Collection of Arms, Formation of Regular Guerrilla Squads for Armed Resistance

The people took the initiative. Youths in villages formed themselves into village squads. They collected arms from wherever they could. People themselves brought in their country rifles, spears, knives, et cetera, and everything they used in hunting. *Patels* and *patwaris* who had come to some agreement with the villagers were persuaded to hand over their arms. Where they refused to give in, the people used to enter the houses and search all over for the arms and take them away forcibly. If in houses they did not find the hidden arms, then a day-and-night watch would be kept on the house and the movements of the inmates in order to prevent hidden arms from being sent out of the villages. When the village officers tried to recover the weapons from the local people to hand them over to the Government, the people used to foil their plans. For example, in Jangaon taluka, the Keshavapuram *patel* collected about 10 muzzle loaders to hand them

over to the Government. The youths of Cheetakoduru got scent of this and rushed in and seized the muzzle-loaders. This way, with the people's initiative, every village acquired about 5–10 muzzle loaders.

Besides these muzzle-loaders, they got hold of 12 bore-guns (*totedar tupaki*) shikari rifles, et cetera, from the *deshmukhs*. These arms were captured by raiding the houses when the enemy was alone or careless. In this, many Party members who were related to the *deshmukhs* or working in their houses as farm or domestic servants, helped a great deal. Through these people, the news of the *deshmukhs'* activities were easily known and getting hold of arms became easier. The *deshmukhs'* houses were raided for arms when they were in no position to resist.

Muzzle-loaders, shot-guns, and rifles of all varieties were seized by the people and local squads, to arm the village as well as the regular squads. Ingenious methods were used by the people in these efforts. Weapons were seized from Seenapalli Deshmukh of Jangaon taluka, from Kondapuram Deshmukh of Huzurnagar taluka, from Sommeru Narasimha Rao and from landlords of Kasarlapadu, Suryapet taluka, from Chintakunta Raghava Reddy, from an army jawan in Kunur, Koram Pratap Reddy of Kondlapalli and Pagali Mallareddy of Rajaram village, from Jannareddi landlords of Kummarikuntla (all in Warangal taluka).

Similarly police and customs outposts, and railway protection police forces were raided, and arms were seized. To mention only a few, Kolanupalli (Bhongir taluka); Outhapuram and Rebarti and Pembarti of Jangaon taluka; Motamarri (Madhira taluka); Madhavagudem (Huzurnagar); Husnabad (Huzurabad, Karimnagar district); Dubbaka and Khanapuram (Siddipet taluka) and many more camps.

To illustrate the ingenuity of the people and of local squads, in planning and raiding enemy posts to seize weapons, the example of the attack on the Vangapalli railway police is given below.

Raid on Vangapalli Station

In the Vangapalli railway station, two policemen were kept on guard duty. They had .303 rifles. One day, at four in the afternoon, four comrades dressed as brahmin priests entered the station master's room and saying that they wanted to go to Yadagiri Gutta to the Narasimhaswamy temple, asked for railway tickets. One policeman was sitting in the room, with his rifle leaning against the wall. The other policeman was not in the station. One comrade engaged the station master, asking him about the fare, et cetera, while two of them caught hold of the policeman. The fourth seized the rifle and all of them, threatening the policeman and station master, successfully made their way out. Next morning, the police went to the Yadagiri Gutta temple and beat up the brahmin priests there saying that they had snatched away the rifle of the police.

At the same time, people from the villages were forming village squads and were resisting the *Razakars* and the police, who used to raid the villages. They

were ready to protect their houses, property and honour. They had stopped giving levy, land tax and *abkari* (excise) duty. The grain procured under levy, and the grains of landlords and anti-people elements were being distributed among the people. They were taking various actions against traitors who were harassing the people and giving information to the *Razakars*. They used to warn traitors and when they did not desist, they caught hold of them and forced them to brush their noses on the ground openly before the people and apologise to them. In Jangaon taluka, Vadlakondu village, the people caught hold of one such element, by name Linga Reddy, who had been harassing the people very much, and cut off his nose. Persons who got some villagers murdered were done to death by these people's squads. The *Sangham* and the Party discouraged and later prohibited such primitive forms of torture and wild revenge.

Formation of Guerrilla Squads

Razakars and armed police used to raid the villages daily, loot the houses, insult and rape women, burn houses, kill people and forcibly collect levy and excise duty. People started resisting them. The Party organised and trained regular armed guerrilla squads without which the people's resistance could not be really effective and succeed.

In the beginning, there were the district guerrilla squads, then the zonal (taluka) and village squads were formed. But the few modern weapons were with the district squads and the zonal (taluka) and village squads had none. To resist the Razakars and police, the district squads alone were not sufficient. This was realised in practice by the Party. The Taluka (zonal) squads were organised and some modern weapons were given to them also from the district squads. Coordination and mutual help among district and different taluka squads was ensured.

In Suryapet, Huzurnagar and Nalgonda talukas, the number in a particular squad rose from 10–20 to 100–120. They were called company squads. These company squads, though they were a morale-booster for the guerrillas and the people, had become too cumbersome and an easy target for the enemy. The necessary training of the ordinary squad members, squad leaders or the command and its auxiliary personnel was lacking. The technical military skill of a whole company going into action, the tactical coordination between its various squads and use of available fire-power and manpower were not there. The supplies to be organised, the quick dispersal and reconverging and the capacity to mount surprise and quick actions upon, and quick disengagement with the enemy were also lacking. Lack of this basic character of guerrilla activity would have led to irreparable losses and to total destruction, but for the very low morale and total isolation of the Nizam's forces. After some initial losses and bitter experiences, these company formations were given up as too premature at that stage; small guerrilla squads of 10 members as a standard unit for actions were adopted. Whenever a bigger force was required two to three necessary squads were mobilised.

Later, when the Indian Union military intervened, the size of these squads was reduced even further to 5 to 3 persons to evade the enemy's dragnet and to get necessary shelter and mobility for action.

The structure of all the guerrilla forces was as described below:

1. **Village squads:** The youths in the villages joined these squads. While carrying on their own normal vocation they had to resist the *Razakars* and the police with muzzle-loaders and spears, see that the enemies in the village did not raise their heads; that the village moderates did not discourage or sow confusion among the people at the time of the struggles nor entice them to pay grain levy, taxes, etc. They had to carry on political propaganda amongst the people, and enthuse them and help the village committees in their day-to-day work.
2. **Village destruction squads:** These forces had to carry on their normal occupation and, on top of this, had to dig up the roads so that enemy vehicles did not come that way, keep planks full of nails on the road to puncture the tyres of the enemy's vehicles, and destroy the property of those enemies who were in the police and enemy camps. They had muzzle-loaders, spades, crowbars, baskets, planks, nails and such other things as their equipment. They had to coordinate their work with the village squads. The members of these squads were not to be exposed.
3. **Regular guerrilla squads:** In these squads, such people were recruited as had given up their own occupation, and were working as whole-timers, had courage, quick wit, and had won the people's confidence and the Party's confidence, too, and who were very much disciplined. They had limited modern weapons along with muzzle-loaders, spears, etc. Their work mainly was to resist the *Razakar* and police raids, destroy the enemy and protect the people. Their number used to be about 10 in a squad. Whenever necessary, they used to carry out raids and immediately disperse. The village squads used to work in cooperation with these regular guerrilla squads and help them whenever necessary. Every member who was recruited into these forces had not only to take a pledge but also remember and concentrate on it always. The pledge used to be:

   "I...pledge that I am joining the guerrilla force and I have pledged with determination to destroy the exploiters' rule and establish the people's raj. To fight and destroy the enemy and help the people is my only job. Weapons are more valuable than life. In getting weapons and protecting them, I am prepared to give my life. I shall never show cowardice nor submit to the enemy but shall emulate the example of glorious martyrs. I take this pledge in front of the red flag".

After the formation of guerrilla squads, the party work was divided into two branches—political and military. This was an important step. There was regular coordination of these two branches of work. With the formation of regular guerrilla squads, a change came in the armed resistance movement. The guerrillas used to ambush or attack and fight the enemy forces face

to face, or raid and destroy the enemy camps. They became experts in these resistance attacks. We have seen earlier how untrained youths used to join the squads and with the help of the people, used to collect muzzle-loaders or guns raiding the houses of *deshmukhs*, and fought back *Razakar* raids. From amongst these youths, capable young men were recruited in the regular guerrilla squads. These squads with these country weapons became the nuclei of the people's armed forces that enabled the people to destroy the governmental authority in village after village, and establish people's rule in about 3000 villages of Telangana.

Some Notable Armed Actions

1. **Raid on Ravulapenta camp:** This was the first raid after regular district armed squads were formed. The squad wanted to destroy the camp at Ravulapenta and capture the arms. The person who was to fire at the sentry, the comrades who were to surround the camp house, and others who, after the sentry was done away with, had to go in and take over the arms, were all fixed and they had taken their positions. They shot dead the sentry at 11 in the night. But the police inside fired back. Due to this police firing, the guerrillas as planned could not get inside the house. Comrade Venkata Reddy and Devabattini Venkateswar Rao, the leaders in this district squad, were courageously trying to get inside the camp. They rushed forward from their sheltered position when police bullets hit them and both of them died on the spot. The raid failed and the guerrillas retreated with the dead bodies of their comrades; the enemy lost two persons and three others were wounded.
2. **Kotapadu Smoke Bomb:** In Suryapet taluka, near Kotapadu village, 5 *Razakars* and 7 policemen tried to rape a woman. They were chased by the people and the guerrilla squad. They entered the house of the landlord, Vangeti Linga Reddy, and after locking themselves up on the second floor of the house, started firing at the guerrillas from behind the windows. The guerrillas posted watch all round the village, and taking cover behind the walls of the houses kept up fire at them. Then the guerrillas seeing their shots being wasted, withheld fire. The enemy was firing non-stop. The villagers had gathered round and were helping the guerrillas with whatever they wanted, when one of them suggested that hay should be brought and spread round the house and set on fire, and thus smoke out the enemy. This was agreed to by the guerrillas. (This tactic was adopted in many incidents afterwards and got the name of 'smoke bomb').

   The villagers with great enthusiasm brought hay from the landlord's store to the house. The landlord begged the people not to destroy his house. He also tried to save the *Razakars* but the people brushed him aside, and set fire to the hay all round. The fire spread quickly and smoke swirled up smothering the enemy. The heat became unbearable for them. The enemy cried out that they would surrender and their lives be spared. The guerrillas

asked them to throw their arms first. Having no other option, the enemy accepted the guerrillas' demand. The people with their quick reaction, again brought in lots of hay and spread it on the ground like a carpet, and saw to it that no weapon thrown gets damaged. The enemy tried to dodge the guerrillas by throwing some weapons only. Meanwhile, the fire was put out. The guerrilla leader with some squad members went up and asked the enemy to surrender. One of the policemen who had kept a rifle with him raised it against the leader. But the guerrilla squad fired at them and shot them all.

The next day, at dawn, about 600 military, police and *Razakars* came and surrounded the village and searched all the surrounding places for nearly 10 miles around. Unfortunately, the guerrilla squad was caught in this military encirclement but with great tact and firing away at the enemy, escaped without any loss.

Comrade Golla Komarayya was a hefty, strong man and was one of the local members accompanying the guerrillas. He tried to save a big gun, a very heavy one, from falling into the hands of the enemy. He managed to carry it a certain distance but a shot from the enemy hit him in the stomach and he fell dead. The gun was captured by the enemy. The same day the enemy set fire to the whole village of Kotapadu. People who were running away were fired at and four people were killed. This incident taught the guerrillas the lesson that after their raids, they should not be anywhere near the place of raid, but go far away, and also that they should not keep heavy weapons and arms or any other heavy material with them that would hamper their quick movement. Accordingly, directions were given to all the squads. Further, smoking out the enemy whenever necessary and possible, also became a common tactic for all the squads;

3. **The incident that caused heavy loss in Chintalammagudem:** A part of the district squad was collecting information in Huzurnagar taluka. It stayed in Pedaveedu, near the hamlet of Chintalammagudem village.

Both Pedaveedu and Chintalammagudem were strong Party centres. In this village, there were experienced militant party members who had taught a good lesson to a notorious arrogant sub-inspector, Gurdayal Singh. An agricultural labourer strike was going on when the landlords raised a Hindu-Muslim bogy to break the strike. Since most of the striking labourers were Muslims, the Hindu landlords stopped issuing grains to the labourers. Taking advantage of this situation, the religious heads of the *Razakars* were trying to organise the Muslim labourers into a separate organisation. The two villages were quite tense due to this strike.

The local village comrades came to know of the presence of the squad in the vicinity and they sought help from the taluka leader. The taluka leader entered the village along with the whole squad to solve the problem. The news reached the *Razakars* in nearby Raghunathapalem. They and the police came down and surrounded the village. The sentry on the tree failed to notice

the police and the *Razakars* approaching. Part of the squad barred the entrance to the village preventing the enemy entering it, while another section tried to breach the enemy encirclement and effect a safe retreat.

The *Razakars* and the police could not enter the village and fighting went on. Comrade Linganna was wounded in the stomach. In spite of this, Linganna exhibited exemplary courage and bravely made a determined bid and successfully breached the enemy column and ran for a mile. He was exhausted and was caught and killed by the mounted police who were in hot pursuit.

At last, the police and the *Razakars* forced their entry into the village. Comrade Sitaramaiah (original name Gopaiah) was resisting the enemy taking position behind the totem stone (*boddu rai*). A soldier who had deserted the military along with his rifle and had joined the squad a month before, betrayed and thrust a spear from behind into Sitaramaiah's back. Sitaramaiah could not move. The enemy closed in. In his last minute Sitaramaiah killed a policeman and died.

In this crisis, the remaining squad decided to abandon the resistance and retreat. When the squad came out of the village, the enemy surrounded them. Comrade Sankar Reddy died of a bullet shot. Comrade Pullaiah was wounded by a spear thrust. The squad could get him out of the enemy encirclement and retreat to safety only after a stiff fight. Three from the enemy were killed. But the Party suffered a heavy loss. Three of our finest comrades were lost along with three modern weapons and four hand grenades. It was a lesson. An inexperienced military squad ignores its guerrilla rules, and suffers a great loss.

4. **Guerrillas Retaliate:** Two comrades had lost their lives during a guerrilla raid on Ravulapenta, and in the enemy raid on Chintalammagudem, three more had died. A meeting of nearly 500 members of squads from all the villages in the taluka was held. Everyone took a pledge in memory of the dead comrades to avenge their deaths. Many members joined the district squad. This was the beginning of the company squad.

The *Razakars* from all over, including the Raghunathapalem camp, had gathered in Pedaveedu village. On the fifth day after the Chintalammagudem raid, Pedaveedu was surrounded by a guerrilla squad. All the roads to the village were blocked by them. They converged on the *Razakars* in the centre of the village. From morning 5 to 10 a.m. the fight went on. The *Razakars* climbed on to the upper storey of the houses and started firing from there at the guerrillas. The squad pressed forward to destroy the enemy. At last, remembering the Kotapadu smoke bomb, they decided to set fire to the houses where the enemy was entrenched. The enemy was forced to leave their positions. The squads fought on picking out the notorious *Razakars* from among the crowd. Six of the notorious rowdy *Razakars* died in this skirmish. The squad left the village amidst shouts of *'Jai'* (Victory). Later the military came and took away the dead bodies. From all over the taluka, every village

sent greetings to the guerrilla squad. The enemy had lost face and was more demoralised.

5. **Raid near Kandagatla wells:** A guerrilla squad and the political organiser of the centre were camping near the Kandagatla wells, when the people went there with their problems of land distribution and were discussing them. At about 10 o'clock in the day, the District Collector, having got scent of the guerrillas' camp, went to the place with 50 *Razakars* and policemen in civil dress. The sentry on duty was careless and the enemy was not noticed till they were within 200 yards of the squad. The guerrillas, firing at the enemy, slowly took cover behind small boulders. The enemy tried to rush them before they took cover, shooting wildly from their modern weapons. But the squad under the command of their organiser, retreated systematically in a disciplined way, with one batch retreating while another batch covered the retreat, pinning the enemy down, till all of them reached a rocky place safely. Two of the enemy fell down in this skirmish which made the enemy stop rushing at the squad and this helped the guerrillas a good deal.

   But just about two hundred yards away from the boulders, where the guerrillas had taken shelter, there were three big rocks in a triangular pattern. When the guerrillas got behind one rock, the *Razakars* took shelter behind the second rock. The guerrillas very quickly occupied the third rock, giving no chance to the enemy to occupy it, and started firing at the enemy from their advantageous position. The enemy was well equipped with arms and ammunition and was bigger in number, too, but could not move even one step ahead from the place where it had taken shelter. After a long fight the enemy left the field.

   A notable thing here was that the people who were with the guerrillas helped the squad enthusiastically shouting information about the movements of the enemy. In spite of the squad's advice to go away, they were confident that the enemy could do no harm to them while the guerrillas were with them, wishing complete destruction of the enemy and complete victory for the guerrillas. The people took great care of everything that belonged to the guerrillas including their utensils. The district Collector got shot near his ear in that firing and the people say that he was so frightened that he swore that he would never again be anywhere near a fighting scene.

6. **Lightning raid on Mamillagudem camp:** In Mamillagudem village (Suryapet taluka) there were about 50 policemen who used to run amuck in the surrounding areas, harass the people and at night molest the women. Hearing this, two guerrilla members dressed themselves in white clothes, hid their bore-guns (*tota tupaki)* under the chaddars which were wrapped round their bodies and went to the camp at night when the policemen had gathered together and were gossiping and enjoying themselves. Suddenly a country-made hand grenade burst amidst them and bullets started flying. Three policemen died. After this, the enemy stopped coming out to harass the villagers

at night. Instead, at the slightest sound, they used to get frightened and used to fire aimlessly.

7. **Raid on Bikkumalla palm-groves:** Forty *Razakars*, policemen and *deshmukh's goondas* raided Bikkumalla village. They made arrangements for cooking their food in the village and were going to the neighbouring village Machinapalli for raiding it. The guerrilla squad which was resting in the streamlets near the village and behind the boulders, came to know of the enemy's movements through the alertness of the sentry. Making use of the enemy's movements using binoculars, the guerrillas moved on. The squad divided itself into two batches. One was to enter the village and the other was to take cover in the ditches and crevices on the land on the other side of the village, to prevent the enemy from coming into the village and getting an upper hand.

   As the enemy approached, the guerrillas from all sides fired at them simultaneously. The enemy lost ground and started running. The squad chased them. A mile ahead, the enemy entered a palm-grove and fired back at the guerrillas. The guerrillas also turned towards the trees on the sides of the grove. The enemy's plan of not allowing the guerrillas to enter the palm-grove was foiled. The guerrillas who had entered the grove pressed on the enemy from three sides. The grove was resounding with echoes of shooting.

   The villagers about 3–4 miles away also realised that a battle was going on just near them. People from Chinnanemili, Peddanemili and Bikkumalla came out and were watching this fierce fight from a distance, ardently desiring victory to the guerrillas. The enemy resisted at every step till 2 in the afternoon. They were taking cover of the palm trees one after another and were firing wildly. The guerrillas were using their bullets sparingly to kill the enemy and were moving forward. They drove the enemy out of the palm-grove. The enemy leaving their transport mules, and their food, et cetera, behind ran back to safety to the Errapadu camp. Four of them were injured in this fight.

8. **Razakars murder in Chitakoduru:** *Razakars* from Jangaon used to come to help the Revenue Officer in Chitakoduru (Jangaon taluka) and used to harass the toddy-tappers. One day, six *Razakars* raped one of their women. After that they started going about even unarmed thinking that no one would dare to obstruct them. One day, three *Razakars* who were sitting in a palm-grove drinking toddy, were caught by the guerrillas, with the cooperation of the people. One of them, who was earlier in the guerrilla squads had been let off after admonition. He reported to the *Razakars'* camp. On the third day, about 200 *Razakars* and police swooped on the village and killed several comrades including Kottha Veera Reddy, Kottha Raj Reddy, Kondam Hanumayya, Ayyoru Ramayya. The village was set on fire and destroyed.

9. **Razakars and police raids on Puligilla village – 22 people murdered:** In Puligilla village of old Bhongir taluka, the guerrilla organiser had called the people outside the village and was holding a meeting. Getting this information

through traitors, about 30 *Razakars* and police from the Mustyalapalli camp came in a lorry. The sentry on duty informed the guerrillas who went a furlong away and took cover behind boulders. As the *Razakars* came into the unprotected space, the guerrillas who were at a height on the boulders, fired first at them. The enemy had no cover but immediately they lay down on the ground and started firing. But their bullets hit no one. After some time, with no other way out, they called their lorry nearer and taking cover behind it, slowly got into it and drove away. There were no losses on either side. The enemy felt insulted by this incident and again they attacked the village and killed whomsoever they could get. This way 22 people became victims of the enemy's fire.

10. **Fight to get Addaguduru camp abolished:** The *Razakars* and the police established a camp in Addaguduru (Ramannapet taluka) as a base for raiding the surrounding villages. About 50, Razakars and police, were in the camp. The squads collected about 500 people from all the surrounding villages and came to the spot. By the time, they arrived at the village, it had become dark, so they camped for the night in the Moolaregadi hamlet on the outskirts of the village. They had thought of attacking the camp in the morning. This news reached the police through informers and they took the initiative and attacked the guerrilla squads at four in the morning.

    The sentry on duty raised the alarm seeing the police, and the people and the guerrillas rushed out on the enemy pelting them with stones. The enemy was firing at the people and was moving forward, while the people were taking cover or lying on the ground to avoid the bullets and they were scattered all over the place. The guerrillas fired back on the enemy. Four of the enemy died on the spot and three were wounded. The enemy took the dead and wounded and went back. The comrades who were in the leading position, Kanneboyina Sayanna (Adimpet) and Podichedu Lingayya (Anachipuram) were wounded by enemy bullets. Lingayya was hit in the stomach and died on the spot. Sayanna, who was a very strong man, was hit in the head and was on the verge of death. The guerrilla squad was treating him and was searching for others who might have fallen wounded. It was daylight by then and the police returned with renewed vigour and started firing from a distance. One man in the village got hit in the thigh and his leg was broken. The squads fired back and retreated. The enemy entered the village and pierced the throat of Sayanna, who was already gasping, with a bayonet. But after this fight the Addaguduru camp was abolished.

11. **A woman's honour safeguarded in Anantapur:** Twenty policemen came to Anantapur (Jangaon) and started harassing the people. Four of them forcibly dragged a woman behind some trees. The squad which was nearby rushed to protect the woman. Seeing them the police opened fire but the guerrillas taking cover behind the well moats returned the fire. Taking this opportunity the woman escaped. The police who were in the village, harassing the people,

rushed at the squad, firing. The squad stopped the police from coming forward with the only rifle they had with them. After this skirmish, the police and the squad left the place. The people were very happy that they, saved by the guerrillas from the police harassment, celebrated the victory.

12. **Fight for releasing the levy grain carts near Konduru:** About 15 policemen had forcibly collected levy grains in Padisala and Yelamaigudem villages and loading it on 20 carts, were taking them via Konduru village. All these villages were in the old Bhongir taluka. The guerrillas who had only muzzle-loaders with them took cover behind the tail-end of the line of carts and fired shots at the enemy, who were in the front. The police took cover behind the carts in front and fired back with their rifles and goaded the drivers to speed up. One of the squad members put a lead ball along with the gunpowder in the muzzle-loader and fired. It shot up like a bullet with a big sound. The police were frightened. While shooting was going on, some carts from the rear turned back and escaped.

    In Nasimpet: The *Razakars* and police were forcibly taking away the levy grain putting it on carts from Nasimpet village in Suryapet taluka, when the guerrillas under the leadership of Comrade Gopal Reddy stopped them and shot four of the enemy dead. The cart drivers also ran away. The enemy, who were lying on the ground firing wildly, ran away after some time, leaving the carts behind. Afterwards the villagers with the help of the guerrillas handed the grains back to the owners.

    In Nutanakallu: 160 bags of levy paddy was restored to the peasants by the combined action of the guerrillas and the people.

    In Ammanabrolu village: About 20 *Razakars* and police came to Ammanabrolu village of old Bhongir taluka and forcibly collected levy grain and loading it on carts, started out. The guerrillas overtook them about a furlong away from the village and taking cover of the Musi canal bund, opened fire on the enemy who left the rear carts but drove off with the carts in front. The carts in the rear, left behind, returned to the village and the grain was returned to the peasants.

13. **Fight against cavalry raids:** About 30 *Razakars* and police mounted on horses surrounded the village of Arruru (old Bhongir taluka) early in the morning. They raided, looted some houses and molested some women. All the villagers were rounded up and brought to the foot of a hillock under the tamarind trees. The police were busy taking out tamarind birches for beating the villagers. It was 9 in the morning. Hearing this news, the squad with 40 members divided itself into three batches, and planned to attack the enemy. As decided, one batch got on top of one of the bungalows in the village, the second got up on the hillock under which the villagers were herded and the third took position in a small tank on the other side of the village and from all the sides, all fired simultaneously. Two enemy horses which were tied up died at once and the enemy lay flat on the ground.

The villagers got free and went back into the village. The enemy had no cover, so they crawled along to the animals' shed and got inside. But from there, their bullets could not hit the guerrillas. On the other hand, the bullets from the bungalow were hitting the shed directly. The enemy was taking cover behind the walls of the shed but they were undecided as to how long they could stand there like that. They could not get out. The squad after some time retreated. And the enemy, heaving a sigh of relief, without even looking bock, ran away.

Velamajala village: In Velamajala village (old Bhongir taluka) the squad was holding a public meeting when 12 mounted armed men came. The sentry informed the squad. They dispersed the meeting and went out of the village. But the police on their horses rushed after them at a great speed. It was an open place with no protection or cover for the squad members who were firing at the enemy and trying to escape. Comrade Ganta Papi Reddy, with great courage, stood up and shot at the Amin (sub-inspector) with his muzzle-loader. It missed the Amin very narrowly. But then the enemy fired on that comrade and he was hit in the chest. Knowing that he was sure to die, this hero stood up and gave a fight with only one idea, to enable the other squad members to escape by drawing the enemy's fire on to himself. Ganta Papi Reddy belonged to Kaprayapalli village, Bhongir taluka. He joined the guerrilla forces and was active in the whole area. He saved his comrades sacrificing his own life.

Rapaka village: From the Mothukuru camp a cavalry unit of ten raided Rapaka village (old Bhongir taluka). The guerrilla squad which was in the village was trying to escape when the enemy spotted them and chased them. Even before the guerrillas crossed the village border, the horses were on them. The guerrillas lay flat on the ground and opened fire at the enemy. Unable to withstand the guerrilla squad's fire, the enemy turned back and went away. While returning, they found Comrade Kondukuru Mallayya, Adimpet village leader, who was unarmed and was trying to escape, and they shot him dead. The experience in this raid gave confidence to the people and the guerrillas that mounted armed forces could also be fought back successfully.

Skirmish in palm-groves of Solipet: On getting information that a company squad was in the palm-grove of Solipet village (Nalgonda taluka), about 40 *Razakars* with 20 mounted police came in the morning at 11 a.m. to that place. The squad took the initiative and taking cover behind palm trees showered the enemy with bullets from three sides. One horse and two policemen died immediately. The rest ran away firing back. Those who ran away were chased quite a distance by the guerrillas. To take revenge for this defeat, and to put down the people's enthusiasm, the Razakars resorted to terrorisation, shot dead seven people in Ogodu, six in Kaparthi and five in Vallela.

14. **Stiff resistance in Errabelli village hillock:** One day the police raided the

village of Errabelli (Warangal taluka). The squad which was taking food in the village chased them. The police hid themselves amongst the people and slowly went away. The squad could not shoot because of fear of hitting the people.

Sixty military men from the Mulkapur camp, in Huzurabad taluka, raided Narayanagiri and Mupparm villages. They harassed the Errabelli villagers also and drunk toddy in the palm-groves of that village, and got their food ready. The squad followed the military wherever it went. All along these three villages there are small hillocks in a line. They are called 'Inuparthi Gatlu'. The squad members camouflaged themselves with tree branches and went along the hillocks. At last, they took their positions behind the rocks of the hillocks on the way from Errabelli to the Mulkapur camp. At about 5 in the evening, the military men, fully drunk, were coming along that road in four big carts. People were being made to carry the cooked food on their heads. Some military men were walking behind the people. Only the first cart was a riding cart with a top on. The others were big carts without any cover.

As soon as they came within the firing line, the guerrillas fired at the carts with their rifles, guider and other weapons. Especially the guider fired bullets right at the enemy. At the first blow, 11 died and some more were wounded. Their officer who was in the first cart ran away and was not traced. The remaining military men took cover behind the carts and started shooting. The people who were carrying the enemy's food and the soldiers behind them ran away. One bullock died and the rest stampeded away. A rifle which was hung on one of the carts also went with it. The dead and injured were lying on the road but the rest of the military men were not allowing the squad members to approach with their fire. Yet the squad gave a stiff fight. Both sides had full cover. Till 8 in the night, the battle went on. As it would have been dangerous if more military came in, the squad would need to withdraw. Afterwards the military did receive reinforcements, searched the hillocks with the help of light bombs, shooting all the time, collected their dead and wounded and went away. The squad got the rifle which was hanging on the cart from the cart-owner in the village and it was given the name 'Errabelli rifle'. The squad used to take great pride in owning that rifle. Three days after the incident, the military came back to that same village and shot dead three lambadi men.

15. **In Kothakonda:** In Huzurabad taluka, the squad was surprised by the armed police, as the sentry fell asleep, but returning fire the squad retreated to the hillocks. The military chased them. Yet, the squad members reached the hillocks and protected themselves. But two students, Ramachandram (Karimnagar) and Devanandam (Warangal), who had come to meet the squad, could not run with them and took cover behind a cattle shed. Both of them were caught, tied together and shot dead. After the military went away, the

squad came back to looking for their losses and finding the dead bodies, gave them a proper funeral. The person who was the cause of all this was done away with. After this, the squad held a meeting and removed the leader, who had shown weakness at the crucial moment and chose another one.

16. **Heavy blow at Lingampalli:** There were two squads in Lingampalli (Huzurabad taluka). They had kept watch outside the village but one of the squad leaders was not alert. When the police came near him he was busy shaving, he ran raising the alarm. The other members firing at the police tried to escape from the encirclement and were partially successful. Comrades Narra Gopal Reddy (Jangaon taluka), Regula Outhapuram, Malla Reddy (Pasaramadla), Boda Ailayya (Marrigada), and two other Huzurabad comrades died in this fight. This happened at 11 a.m.
17. **Fight in Manukota taluka:** About 100 policemen surrounded the squad, which was in Chetlamupparam village. That was a forest area. Yet due to the carelessness of the sentry, the police were unnoticed till they surrounded the whole area. The squad leader, with great courage, fired from his stengun all round at the approaching enemy. Ten of the enemies died and many were injured. The rest of the police lay flat on the ground. A big gap was formed where the enemy had died. And the enemy lying flat with fright, the guerrillas got a chance to get out of the encirclement. But the enemy started firing again at the guerrillas who had slipped out of their dragnet. The squad leader kept up the fire at the enemy and did not allow them to step forward. Three bullets hit him in the arm, but with that broken arm, he held on to his sten-gun and with blood streaming from the wounds, retreated a little and took cover behind some shrubs. With the fire from the guerrillas' side stopping, the enemy came forward and searched the area following the bloodstains. They searched the place around the shrubs where he was hiding. At last, it became dark and the enemy took their dead bodies and went back. After that the squad leader who was left alone, thirsty, and very weak from loss of blood, with great difficulty reached a village nearby and with the help of the villagers went to a safe hiding place. From there he was sent to another safer place for treatment, when he had to cross the enemy line in a palanquin in the garb of a woman. But for the timely presence of mind and great courage of that squad leader, the whole squad, consisting of 40 members, would have been completely wiped out.
18. **Ammanabrolu fight:** Seventy *Razakars* and policemen from the Mothukuru camp had raided Ammanabrolu village (old Bhongir taluka). They set fire to the houses and took the Muslim villagers from that place along with them. As the police entered the village, information was sent to the people of the surrounding villages. By 9 in the morning, thousands of people gathered along with the local squad. They closed the only road to the village across the Musi river. They made a breach in the road and camouflaged it with light fallen trees with a slight mud cover with earth dug up from the other side of the river where one had to get out. Having done this, they hid themselves

under the trees on the high banks of the river. As soon as the Razakars and the police got into the river. they were surrounded by the people, who loudly shouted slogans and gave the enemy a fright.

The people threatened the enemy and asked them to surrender their arms. The whole area was resounding with their shouts and slogans. Then they started pelting stones and firing muzzle-loaders. The enemy who was taking about 50 families of Muslim villagers with them, made them clear up the road, and all the while went on firing at the people, not allowing them to go near. Parna Janaki Reddi (25 years), Ammanabrolu squad leader, went ahead and fired his muzzle-loader, but an enemy bullet killed him. People rescued the dead body and the weapon. Another comrade from the village fired at the enemy when he got his leg broken by a bullet. He also was taken away by the people, along with his gun.

People could not go forward due to the incessant fire kept up by the enemy but with the strong desire to destroy the enemy, they would not go back. This went on for some hours. Meanwhile, the road was cleared and the enemy crossed the river. They were, all the time, firing away, not allowing the people to come nearer. People were also firing at the muzzle-loaders and using their slings. As the enemy approached the Bujulapuram hillocks, Guggilla Mallayya, who belonged to the Bujulapuram squad hiding behind a boulder, threw a stone at the enemy.

Before he could throw another stone, the enemy's bullet hit him and killed him. The enemy quickly stepped out of those hillocks as it was getting dark. After this, the people gave a proper cremation to the dead bodies in their respective villages. The people fought heroically for three hours, chasing the enemy from their villages.

19. **People's fight in Vadlakonda:** The villagers in Vadlakonda, armed with muzzle-loaders and slings, used to take up positions at the beat of the drum. Once the police and the *Razakars* raided the village but local volunteers and the guerrilla squad drove them away. After 15 days, military men surrounded the village. People noticed this and beat the drum. The local squad and the people took cover behind the wall around the village and pelted stones and fired from their muzzle-loaders. The military used automatic weapons also. They fired innumerable shots. Comrade Yadagiri who had broken a soldier's leg with his sling, got hit in the stomach and died. Kummari Narasimhulu who was firing a muzzle-loader under cover, got hit in the thigh and broke his leg. Another comrade who was firing from behind the well got hit by the enemy's bullet in the stomach. After this the enemy broke through into the village. Now the people had no protection. They threw their arms into the wells but were beaten up mercilessly. Just then, about 300 people from Cheetakoduru came there with their slings and muzzle-loaders to help the people of Yadlakonda. But they could not stand the enemy's fire and had to turn back.

20. **Fight in Akunuru:** Akunuru is a historic place in Jangaon taluka. In 1945, the people there had revolted against the forced levy and made the police and the officers retreat before their wrath. After this the Government had sent a big force of armed police who took revenge on the people, molesting and raping a large number of women. But even then, the people did not give up their fight. They were ready to fight the *Razakars* and the police with their muzzle-loaders and slings and had built up *manchas* (high-level stands from where the peasants drive away birds in ripened millet fields) for keeping watch and warning the enemy's approach.

    One day, the *Razakars* came near the village and sent word that if the people paid them Rs. 10,000 they would not be harassed. But the people flatly refused to pay. The *Razakars* fired shots from outside and the people returned fire from inside. The *Razakars* had to retreat. The guerrilla squad, which meanwhile had rushed there, killed two *Razakar* stragglers. A few days later, a large number of military came at four in the morning and surrounded the village. At daybreak, the sentries on the watch platform in the jowar fields saw them and the drum was beaten. People took cover behind the walls and faced the enemy. But the enemy kept up fire without stop, with bren and stenguns. Seven people died in this fight. Two of them with muzzle-loaders gripped in their hands fell dead. The military entered the village and completely burnt it. Three thousand bags of grain were destroyed by the fire.

21. **Great battle at Bairanpalli (Jangaon-Warangal border):** The Bairanpalli people's battle was a high watermark in the history of the Telangana people's struggle. In that village every man, woman, young and old, had taken their place in this battle and at every step had fought back the enemy. The village itself became a fierce battlefield. In this village, there was a tall battlement. This was very old but yet was very strong, like a fort. This battlement had steps inside it. From this tall battlement, one could see for a long distance all round the village. On the battlement, a big drum, *a* big country gun (*jhajjayi*) and a *karabbi* were kept. Gunny bags full of gunpowder and lead balls were also stored up. A squad permanently used to be on the battlement. They had sufficient guns, arms and ammunition. In case the enemy was able to go up the battlement, the squad had spears, sticks, stones, slings and even boiling water ready, to throw them down again. They had kept sentries all round the village and on every road a fighting squad was always on duty. They were all ready to give fight to the enemy at any hour. A regular guerrilla squad was there to assist and reinforce them.

    One day, about 60 Razakars and policemen from the Laddanur camp raided it. Those on the battlement beat the drum and fired their country gun *(jajjayi)* and *karabbi*, and raised battle cries. The enemy was confounded and stood at a distance from the village. Meanwhile, 200 people with slings and muzzle-loaders, went after the enemy. There was a face-to-face fight

for some time. But the enemy could not stand the people's attack and ran away.

Another day, about 70 *Razakars* and policemen from the same camp, determined to defeat the people, again raided the village. But again the people who were ready, faced them. One of the local squad members, like a lion, jumped on the enemy and caught hold of one *Razakar's* rifle and kicked him in the stomach. But in this fight the rifle went off and the comrade got hit. Even then, he did not give up the rifle. The enemy by this time was running away, not being able to stand the people's fury. That *Razakar* also gave up his rifle and ran away. The rifle was taken and the comrade, after being treated, recouped his health, joined the ranks again.

The *Razakars* many a time tried to raid the village but seeing the people's readiness to fight back, retreated. These villagers' determination to defend their village infected other villages-Dhoolimitto, Akunuru, Lingapuram, Kootigallu, etc. They used to gather at the beat of the drum, and after the enemy left, they too returned. They received military training as to how to face a bigger enemy, or how to avoid the enemy fire by lying flat on the ground, etc.

One day, the guerrilla squad was in the village and was eating groundnuts, when at about 8 in the morning, 300 *Razakars* and the police came to raid it. The guerrillas got on to the battlement. They fired the country gun and the *karabbi*, rifle shots also were fired. This exchange of fire went on for some time. Then the guerrillas remembered the experience of Comrade Renigunta Rami Reddi's fight. If they continued to be on the defensive their bullets would get exhausted, and they would come into the encirclement of the enemy. So they came down from the battlement, took cover behind the walls and started firing at the enemy taking proper aim. One policeman who was setting fire to a house fell dead. From the battlement, from behind the walls, the fire was kept up. Five policemen died. The enemy was given no respite and so they took to their heels, carrying their dead along with them.

After a few days, news came that the enemy was coming on a far bigger scale. The people and the squad were all ready. One day at dawn, 500 *Razakars* and policemen surrounded the village. From the battlement, from behind the walls, from behind the enemy and from outside the village, fire was opened on the enemy. One policeman who clinked up a tree to fire at those on the battlement was hit by a rifle shot and fell dead. The enemy could not even pick up the dead body. Nine more died, they could not carry those nine dead bodies, so they threw them into a well outside the village and ran away.

Another day, in the morning, 200 *Razakars* and policemen again surrounded the village. One policeman, on horse-back and with a rifle in his hand, was moving around. From the battlement, as usual the drum was beaten and guns

opened fire. The guerrilla squad was outside the village in the mango-grove. Unseen by the police and creeping along the ground, they fired at the policeman on horse-back and he fell dead. After some more deaths, and some wounded, the enemy gathered the bodies and took to their heels.

A large force of military men had come down to Jangaon for raids on Bairanpalli and Kootigallu. The party leaders sent word through an important comrade that the guerrillas should leave the village, and also get people to vacate but these instructions were not carried out. By sin in the morning, the military had surrounded the village and was shooting. The military also faced the people's fire. But the military fire was not like the police shooting. The military had come armed with cannon, brens, fire bombs and many other modern weapons. Some soldiers died at the hands of the guerrillas who were taking aim and shooting sharp. Amongst them was the soldier who was firing the cannon. The military turned its attention on the guerrillas and fired fire bombs, cannons and brens. The squad could not stand there and retreated beyond the enemy's gun range.

In the village, those on top of the battlement were firing the country gun and from the lower storey of the *karabbi* and the enemy faced a barrage of shots. The people were fighting from behind the walls. In this fight 13 including a military captain, were killed or wounded. But before the enemy's cannons, resistance was fading. A big breach was made in the top storey of the battlement. Three comrades who were firing the country gun from the top, Motam Posalu, Motam Ramulu (brothers) and Balije Nagayya died. Others got down. Some more among the people and the local squad members also died. Many escaped realising that the enemy was far too powerful and had all the modern weapons.

Eighty people were rounded up and tied and shot dead by machine-gun fire. Some youths who had fought heroically were mercilessly tortured and then shot dead. By next morning, when the guerrilla squads from all round converged onto the village, 88 dead bodies were lying there. The guerrillas gave the people courage and consolation. Then the dead were cremated and all people turned up to pay homage to the martyrs. The father of Posalu and Ramulu, overcoming his grief at the loss of his two sons, urged upon the area commander to take revenge on the butchers and the Government and fight till final victory.

22. **Kootigallu-another battlefield:** Kootigallu village (Jangaon taluka) also like Bairanpalli had been raided many a times by the *Razakars*. People fought them back successfully. All the arrangements were made on the battlement and the Razakars and police were thrown back. The guerrilla squad was also there.

Once the *Razakars* and police who belonged to that part, but had gone away, came back to take away their cattle. The battle drum was beaten. People did not allow them to enter the village. One comrade fixed up a palm fruit on a spear and went after them shouting 'bomb, bomb.' They

got panicky and ran away. While running away they found a villager and attacked him. He got enraged and with his axe killed two Razakars outright. The others fell on him and plucked out his eyes and then with the axe cut him to pieces. After that they used to be afraid to go near anyone who had a stick or an axe with him.

Another time, there arrived 500 *Razakars* and policemen. The guerrilla squad was in the village itself. The drum was beaten. People got ready. The enemy was halted at a distance and took cover behind the palm trees and the bunds in the fields and opened fire. Both sides kept up the fire for some hours. From three sides the people and the guerrillas surrounded the enemy and pressed on. When they were not able to stand it they ran away. The people and guerrillas chased them and drove them to Gugillapuram, about half a mile from the Madduru camp.

On the day of the battle in Bairanpalli, about 200 military raided this village, too. Here also some people, trusting the *deshmukh*, instead of escaping stayed on. The fighting squad from the battlement came down. Some were killed in the village and some were taken to a banyan tree outside the village and shot dead. Twenty people died in this battle, either while fighting with guns in hand or after capture by the military. Amongst those who died on the battlement, there was Comrade Yembayya of Ganapuram (Siddipet taluka). He had fought against the *deshmukh* in his village and had driven 30 of that *deshmukh's* cattle to Kootigallu and while on that mission he fought heroically and was killed. When the guerrilla squad went there, the dead bodies were lying all over. One comrade who had a little breath left was lifted by the guerrillas and he breathed his last in their arms.

After the military raids on these two villages the Razakars and police again came there to loot. They thought that there would be no one alive to resist them. Four hundred *Razakars* and policemen got into Bairanpalli, and started looting the houses and setting fire to them. They had got up on the battlement and were trying to demolish it with crowbars. The squad which was having its meeting a little distance away, got the news and came down immediately and attacked them. Two of those who were on the battlement fell down to the ground and died. The enemy could just retrieve the dead bodies, and leaving their carts and their loot, ran away wildly shooting at the people.

Three hundred *Razakars* and policemen surrounded Kootigallu village also, setting fire to houses and haystacks. The guerrillas who were outside the village took cover behind trees and fired at the enemy. Three of them died. Just at that time, a shell which had lodged in a haystack during on earlier raid, exploded with a very big sound. After this incident, till the 'police action', no *Razakar* or police came to raid this village.

23. **Raids on Wardhannapeta:** An eighteen-member squad under the leadership of Comrade Junugu Butchireddy went to Kolanupalle (Warangal taluka) and was distributing the land at the landlords at about 11 in the morning. Hiding

their arms at one place, the people and the squad were busy in the distribution work. So enthused were they that they did not care to keep a sentry. In such a situation, 30 *Razakars* and policemen came from Rayaparthi camp and encircled all of them. Only two members of the squad could make their escape. The rest of the squad members were tortured but none of them gave information about the place where weapons were hidden. They said that they had no weapon at all. The police gave up hope of getting weapons from them, but when they searched the squad commander, they found a notebook in which were written the names of the members of the village committee of the Party, village leaders and such other details.

On the basis of this list, they went to Gannavaram village along with the squad. All the menfolk escaped from the village and only women were found there. All of them were herded together and they were beaten to force them to give information about village leaders and volunteers, but they pleaded ignorance. Similarly, they tortured the squad members before the women to get the names of families who helped them, but they failed to get even a single bit of information. The women who saw this were happy that the guerrillas kept the secrets and this emboldened them further. The womenfolk started abusing the enemy and threatened to take their lives if they dared to touch them.

The *Razakars* searched the whole village and found the old peasant Rajili Venkatareddi. Even he was not spared and was beaten. Then they set fire to about ten houses, one of which belonged to a squad member and contained a rifle; the ammunition caught fire and blasted with a terrific sound. The police got the fright of their lives; they thought that another squad had come and took to their heels, taking the squad members along with them. They were kept in the camp and were beaten up.

The same night, people prepared themselves to secure the release of their squad members. The two squad members, Comrades Kukkala Ramulu and Battini Komarelli, who had escaped being caught, led the people and went to Wardhannapet where the squad members were kept in custody. This huge wave of mass enthusiasm frightened the police and they fled from the camp. People entered the camp, broke open the gates and locks and secured the release of their beloved sons. This created quite a sensation among the people in the whole area.

Within three days of this incident, squads belonging to Warangal and Jangam talukas met together and decided to demolish the camps at both Rayaparthi and Wardhannapet and drew up a plan to mobilise thousands of local people.

Hundreds of people marched on to the Wardhannapet camp at about 11 a. m. and surrounded the whole village. The village was on the trunk road and there was not enough protection, yet, the people did not mind this and marched on to the camp. The enemy fled the camp and got onto a high mound nearby and started firing on the people. One was wounded in the thigh. The people did not get frightened and took shelter behind the walls. The guerrillas returned the fire.

While this gun-battle was going on, people raided the houses of *Razakars* and other enemies of the people in the village. Seventy bags of paddy, 200 cattles and a lot of other property were confiscated. It was, however, not possible for the squad to attack the enemy since they were in a very good protected place. The squads and people returned while the enemy forces fled from Wardhannapet to Warangal.

The same night, a large crowd of people along with squads reached Rayaparthi village at about 11 p.m. The very approach and sight of this mass of people was enough for the *Razakars* in the village to flee to Warangal. None of the enemies could be caught. But their houses were raided, 200 bags of paddy and cartloads of other things were confiscated. A big bungalow belonging to *Razakar* leader Shamsuddin, costing about Rs. 80,000, was razed to the ground. Houses of other enemies were also brought down. The confiscated property was distributed among the people.

Khammam-Madhira-Kothagudem (Palvancha) Area

This area, bordering the Krishna and West Godavari districts, with the Palvancha forest area on the river Godavari as its eastern part, had special economic features, somewhat distinct from the rest of the Telangana area. It was economically better developed, with the growth of a rich and middle peasantry. It had greater social and economic links with the Andhra area.

Here the movement was based more than in other areas on the demands of the middle peasants and rich peasantry rather than those of agricultural labourer and poor peasantry. During 1942–1945, an agitation was carried on against grain levy, for supply of agricultural goods like iron bands for wheels for bullock carts, etc.

It was also a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. Most of the Andhra Mahasabha leaders like Comrades Chirravuri Lakshmi Narsayya, S. Ramanatham and others had joined the Communist Party in 1940 itself. And it was under their leadership that in 1945, the Telangana Andhra Mahasabha held its last and biggest session here, more than 20,000 persons attending the open rally.

When the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union and the State Congress started a satyagraha movement, the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha actively participated in it. They led big demonstrations, broke forest laws; customs posts were made a special target of attack.

The Nizam Government had set up big Razakar camps in all towns and key centres like Khammam, Madhira, Bonakalu, Nalakondapalli, Kallur and Wyra from where they used to raid neighbouring villages. The Nizam's military squads were posted at every railway station, apart from a regular military patrol train on the railway line from Madhira to Warangal.

After the decision to take up arms, the Nizam's police and the administrative post at Parital, an enclave in Nandigama taluka, Krishna district, were successfully raided; four muskets and 20 muzzle-loaders and about Rs. 1300 in cash were

seized. Similarly, a determined attack on the Motamarri railway military post, by the district guerrilla squad, yielded a few more rifles, and a few of the military men were killed or wounded.

From the landlords in the different parts of these plains, village squads seized about 40 shot-guns and armed themselves better—village squads with muzzle-loaders, and regular guerrilla squads with shot-guns and with one or more modern weapons.

The Congress had organised *a* camp of its own in Tunikipadu, in Tiruvur taluka bordering Kallur area, under the leadership of Jalgam Vengal Rao (a rabid anti-Communist and in 1969-1971, the Home Minister and later the Minister of Industry in the Andhra Pradesh Government). The Communist Party was able to win over a section of them, and later the camp was disbanded, but the guerrillas were able to get 12 rifles from them.

By April 1948, we were able to organise six firka squads, each of 20 persons, and also 40-50 squads of koya people, consisting of about 1,000 persons, besides 50-60 village squads.

Winning over of Koya youth and people: Perintalapalli Sadhu Singaraju used to conduct an ashram for koya tribal people. Many young koyas were attracted to this camp. This was helped and encouraged by the Congress, both from the Union and the Nizam areas. They were given some armed training as well. Hopes were roused among them that they would be free to establish a koya tribal administration and all their woes would end forever. The ashram was on the banks of the river Godavari where Alluri Sitaramaraju had led the koya people in the nearby Agency areas of East Godavari and Vizag against the British zulum during 1922-1924. Those embers were still smouldering.

The Communist Party established contact with these koya youth, took classes, held discussions and a good number of them were won over.

The Party was able to frustrate the efforts of Hemendroff (a missionary who was deputed to enquire into the conditions of tribal people, gonds and koyas, and suggest remedies) to win over the koya people by his officially-sponsored social and economic palliatives.

The Party's success was due to its slogans for koya autonomous area in People's Vishalandhra, end to the forest officers zulum and corrupt practices, and its work in helping the koya people to the free use of forest produce. We put an end to the forced labour, usury and rack-renting indulged in by the landlords in Potuvarigudem, a key koya village in the Palvancha forest area. This had spread the Party's influence throughout the area. Similarly, the *Razakar* and police camp at Mulkalapalli was attacked by the guerrilla squads and it was abandoned later; in this attack, nearly 2,000 koya people from all around could be mobilised to participate.

All these actions swung the 200 odd koya youth trained by Perintal Sadhu, with all their shot-guns and a few hundred crude bombs, to come over to the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party.

It was during this early period itself that Comrades Soyam Gangulu and Kanagala Butchayya come over to us.

Land and grain distributed : The Party distributed the lands of the Nagulancha landlord as well as the grain seized from him to agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The lands and the grain of Kalakota landlords were also distributed.

The Kalluri family which owned about 80,000 acres in over 80 villages, Annapareddipalle, Ammapalem, Gundapudi, Garlavoddu, et cetera, was the most hated oppressor in this area. The Party had distributed all the lands of this family or helped the tenants to exercise their ownership rights on the lands they had been cultivating. The koya people were the largest beneficiaries of this.

As early as 1935, Kalluri Rajeswar Rao had been killed by the people who were fed up with his atrocities. After the police action, the Kalluri family seized back the lands, but one-fourth of them were retained by the peasants, utilising the Tenancy Acts enacted by the State Government after the Telangana struggle. This success was due to the constant efforts of the Communist Party.

Similarly, in Arekayalapadu (Madhira taluka), landlord Edunutola Gopalarao's lands were distributed. After the Indian army's entrance, he tried to seize those lands again. The people fought back and ultimately he had to agree to give ownership (*patta*) rights on 400 acres, accepting token payments of Rs. 10 per acre.

Telladarupalli was a Muslim jagir village. It was a strong centre of the Andhra Mahasabha. Many a tenancy struggle was conducted by the peasants asserting their rights of ownership on the land. A few days before August 15, 1947, the jagirdar's goondas from Khammam town raided the village. But the people overwhelmed them and seized their fire-arms. During the *Razakar* days, repeated attacks were made on this village. People resisted them all and retained their possession of land. Even after the Indian Union's 'police action', the peasants did not give up the land, and were able ultimately to get ownership of title deeds (*patta*) under the Hyderabad Tenancy Act.

Similarly, against the Aswarapet *zamindar*, the Party roused the peasants as well as the koya tribal people, to put an end to his illegal exactions, forced labour, etc.

The Party led the agricultural labourers to occupy waste lands on a large scale in many villages.

In many villages, when irrigation water from tanks was being monopolised by the landlords, the Party and the Andhra Mahasabha intervened to ensure that the small peasants received their due share promptly.

In Manukota area, in the beginning, anti-landlord problems were not taken up. But later, Comrades Venkateswar Rao and Gangavarapu Sreenivasa Rao took up, on a large scale, the land question and the question of usury and debt burdens and distribution of grain.

Comrade Venkateswar Rao in Garle area of Manukota taluk had to fight

against his own uncle who owned 300 acres and a large-scale usurious business. That rogue informed the Nizam's police about his nephew's actual whereabouts and one day, the cavalry surrounded him in Buchimatla. When Comrade Venkateswar Rao tried to break through, he was shot dead.

The anti-feudal struggle, especially the struggle against the Jannareddi family conducted in Suryapet taluka, had its own impact on Manukota area, too, where many landlords belonging to that family held large tracts of lands. So, here, too, guerrilla squads and the Sangham took up the issue vigorously.

In Manukota taluka, during 1947–1948, before the 'police action', the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party organisers and squads distributed 12,000 bags of foodgrains and collected Rs. 135,000. Twenty squads were carrying on raids on *desmukh* '*gadies*'. The total number in these squads was about 400. For some time, these were company squads based on Pindiprolu, Sankeesa, Garla and Metarajupalli. In the clashes with the Nizam's police and military at Chetlamupparam, Sreeramegiri and Janapadu, the guerrillas suffered losses. The Garla organiser Comrade Venkateswar Rao died in the Bucchimatla clash.

In the month of June 1948 alone, 50 persons including two organisers were shot dead, among whom 38 were in the Garla area alone.

The company squads were disbanded, the scattered squad members were reorganised, and within the next two months, by the time of the 'police action', the guerrillas with constant raids forced the Nizam police and the *Razakars* to vacate 16 camps. Railway track was destroyed to the length of one kilometre, the Abbayapalem-Manukota road was also destroyed. More than 1,000 people participated in these actions. In 30 villages surplus land was distributed, leaving 5 acres wet and 50 acres dry to the landlord families in this area.

Allinagaram of Madhira taluka was a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. From this village many joined the Communist Party and the guerrilla squads. After the military outpost in nearby Motamarri village was raided and weapons were seized by the guerrillas, 200 *Razakars* and military raided Allinagaram village and the whole village was burnt and razed to the ground.

On January 13, 1948, the people of *Meenavolu village* of Madhira taluka resisted a *Razakar* raid and drove them back. In this fight, Comrades Tota Venkayya, Tota Lalayya, Bandi Veerayya, Mettala Sreeramulu, Lakkisetti Lakshmi Narasayya and Ratakonda Venkayya lost their lives. But the people succeeded in killing the commander of the Razakars, seized his rifle and handed it over to the guerrilla squad. But the next day, a 200 strong military attacked the village and burnt it down. Three old men, Rampalli Ramayya, Pilla Kotayya, and Sukhaboga Muttayya, were shot dead. The villagers erected a memorial column for the martyrs and paid homage to their memory every year.

Rayanapeta of Madhira taluka was raided by the *Razakars*. Cattle were seized and were being driven out when the guerrilla squad attacked the *Razakars*. Comrades Pagidipalli Jogayya of Kalakota village, Bodepudi Pullayya of, Rayanapeta, who had left their studies and joined the guerrilla squad, were caught

by the *Razakars* and taken to the Bommakallu camp where they were tortured and shot dead.

Muttayya of Proddutur village, Khammam taluka, died in firing by the *Razakars*, when the people of Lakshmipuram and Govindapuram fought back the Razakar raids with their catapults and stones.

Machha Pattayya and Talluri Appayya, two peasant militants, were shot dead by *Razakars* in the Siripuram (Kanakagiri village) of Madhira taluka. This village was a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. Many houses and 50 herds of cattle were burnt by *Razakars*.

Action against Razakar and Nizam military camps: Thousands of people were mobilised to destroy the road communications of the Razakar and military camps. The Bonakalu-Wyra and Kodada-Khammam-Seetampet roads were the main targets of the people's attack. Long stretches were dug up and made useless for military traffic. The Lankapalli bridge on the Aswaraopet road was destroyed, using dynamite, and by people in thousands using crowbars, etc.

The Kothagudem mines are located in this area. The Party had considerable influence among the workers there. It used to get a large amount of gelignite sticks and necessary detonators which were used in these operations as well as for making crude bombs. This source continued not only during the fight against the *Razakars* and the Nizam but later also during the fight against the Indian Union army.

Regular guerrilla squads mounted a series of surprise attacks on the *Razakars* and the Nizam's military camps. The attack on the camp near Gannavaram, which was located in an open place, resulted in the death of two military men, and later on the camp was abolished.

Attack on the camp at Kallur, which had a large Muslim population, which used to support the Nizam, was attempted a number of times, but for lack of local people's cooperation, no effective attack could be carried out.

The attack on Mulkalapalli on the Dammapeta-Palvancha road, with thousands of koya people participating, ultimately forced the Nizam to abolish it.

On Kodada-Khammam Road: A lorry-load of armed police used to daily patrol the road linking Seetampeta with the Kodada-Khammam road. The district guerrilla squad decided to ambush it and snatch the arms. The squad took cover behind the rocks, in three batches at short distances. The middle batch was to open guider (small sub-machine gun) fire after the armed police lorry passed the first batch of the squad and approached the middle sector. If the lorry proceeded further without surrendering, the third batch was to keep up the fire and throw a hand-grenade into the lorry itself. If the lorry tried to turn back and flee, the first batch was to cut off its retreat.

The police, in the lorry, came standing, singing and shouting. Suddenly, they were under a volley of rapid fire from the guider. Some fell dead in the lorry; others ducked and opened fire. The driver speeded forward. Within a few seconds they were met with fire from the third batch and a grenade flew into the lorry

thrown by Comrade Madhava Reddy, commander of the third batch, with coolness and unerring aim. More were killed and wounded. The driver was able to drive away the lorry. The police were terrified because it was the first time that they had been hit from modern weapons so successfully. It was the talk of Khammam town that about 20 special armed personnel were killed or wounded in the attack. But the guerrillas failed to halt the lorry and capture the arms.

The running battle in Kallur forests: The Nizam's military were specially deployed here to prevent any large-scale eruption of the people's movement. They had also reports of unrest among the koya people. Apart from the *Razakar* and local police camps in Kallur, Mulkalapalli, Gannavaram, Gumpena, six lorryloads of the Nizam military with bren-guns were constantly patrolling the area.

The district squad at the time consisting of 70–80 persons with the best military training, good political consciousness, were all in that company. It cleared the Gannavaram and Mulkalapalli camps.

But one day it found itself surrounded near Gumpena. The different squads in the company took positions. As the Nizam's forces were rushing to overwhelm them, the guerrilla commander opened fire with his guider. Other expert squad leaders like Comrades Madhava Reddy, Enukur Buchayya and others opened fire with their rifles. Eight of the enemies fell and the rest were pinned down to the ground. It was just at this moment that Comrade Madhava Reddy led the whole squad to rush to the cover behind a mound and forest, and kept the enemy pinned down. The company was saved, only one guerrilla, Comrade Vasireddi Kotayya of Arekayalapadu, was killed and another wounded.

There was another clash, immediately before this, in which three of the Nizam's army personnels were killed and a rifle was captured. But after the Gumpena experience the big company formation was disbanded, and squads of 20 were organised.

Destruction of main roads: Nizam's *goondas*, enraged at the people's resistance movement growing stronger day by day, attacked the people with greater ferocity and committed many atrocities. They used to set village after village on fire. Day and night, the military in great strength used to raid the villages and terrorise the people. Many people were thrown alive into the fire. Some were made to dig ditches and were forced to lie in them and were buried alive in the Enubamula and Errapadu camps in Suryapet taluka. With the increasing raids in the villages, enemies and the moderates began to raise their head. They even prevented the guerrillas from entering some villages.

The local squads and guerrilla squads had nipped this enemy in the beginning itself, in many places. They dug up trenches around the villages with the idea of not allowing the military vehicles to come into the village. They used to cut up the road between two villages, by digging it up and putting trees and big stones across it. This programme was carried out on a big scale in Suryapet taluka. Even the Trunk Road was cut up. They made breaches in the road between Tirumalgiri and Suryapet at every half furlong, between Suryapet and Khammam, Suryapet and Nayakulagudem. Many culverts were destroyed. In Suryapet, in

Huzurnagar and Nalgonda talukas, many squads and people, many a time, tried to destroy the bridge on the Musi river. In some places dynamite was used. Some strong bridges were destroyed (for example, one in Huzurnagar). In this destruction work, the village destruction squads along with the people and the local squads did tremendous work. Many a guerrilla squad used to stand guard on the road while this work went on. This destruction work used to go on every day wherever it was possible and it went on for months together. The enemy used to fill up the breaches made by the people during the daytime, but at night, again, the people renewed the destruction. It became the main task of the enemy to guard the roads and they did this by increasing the raids on villages. They used to shoot anyone found on the road, in the hope of terrorising the people and preventing them from digging up the roads.

In **Jajireddygudem** (Suryapet taluka) area, the military forcibly brought people to fill up the breaches in the road and while people were doing so under the threat of bayonets, they shot dead six people and threw the bodies the same ditches and filled them with earth afterwards. In the battle for destruction of the Jangaon-Suryapet road, 18 persons from Kasarlapadu, 18 persons from Rammanagudem, 12 from Patarlapadu and 12 from Bollanpalli, a total of 60 persons were shot dead and buried in the breaches on the road. But the guerrillas under the leadership of Comrade Anireddy Rami Reddy were able to destroy a stretch of 13 miles of the road. Comrade Rami Reddy kept up the spirit of the people all through the weeks of this terrific struggle. The popular Telugu rhyme of Balamuru Kondayya '*Arunurla Thatta Para, Mudu nurla Gaddapara*' (three hundred crowbars, six hundred baskets and spades shall do the job) was put into practice.

The Nizam's police and military committed many atrocities to terrorise the people. But the people did not stop. Along with this destruction work, the squads adopted new methods to puncture the tyres of military trucks and government buses on the Trunk Road.

Near the Mote village (Suryapet taluka), they fixed up big iron nails specially designed for this purpose. But that did not work. Again, on the same road, they fixed up nails on to wooden planks and laid these planks across the road. The nails were very small and so these planks were also not very effective. So later on they fixed up 6-inch-long nails with half an inch thickness on both sides of the planks slantwise and put them in the centre of the road. As a result lorries and buses coming from both directions had their tyres deflated. The drivers of those vehicles used to be mortally afraid to get down and fix the tyres on the spot.

At last the enemy put up innumerable camps to increase the intensity of the raids on the villages. There were camps at a distance of every four to five miles and at places even at two to three miles. Military from three or four camps used to collectively raid all the villages in that area and search all around the places upto eight to ten miles. Like this, one day in one area, the next day in

another area, they used to concentrate their attention on raids and searches. These camps used to be put up in *deshmukhs'* bungalows. In order to defeat this, the people and local squads pulled down the landlords' bungalows in many places. In some places, they pulled down the parapet walls on top of the houses, so that the enemy could not take cover there and open fire on the people. This programme of destruction of bungalows was carried out very successfully. All village people used to take part in this. This was carried on with extra vigour in the Suryapet taluka. And so, in many places where the enemy wanted to put up camps, it could not do so as there were no bungalows left for that purpose. After the squads started surrounding and attacking the camps, the number of camps also decreased. There were lesser number of camps now but with more men in each of them. In Nalgonda taluka, miles of trenches were dug by the people, linking one sheltered contour with another, so that the guerrillas could move unobserved and avoid being pursued by the mounted cavalry of the Nizam.

But the Nizam's forces intensified their brutal terror more and more.

In Patarlapadu village (Suryapet taluka), twenty young men (local volunteers and villagers) were made to stand in a line with their hands tied and were shot dead. Two of them were still breathing when they were covered with grass and dried leaves and set fire to.

In Chandupatla village, which is about one and a half miles away from Errapadu (Suryapet taluka), 12 local squad members, big, hefty and strong men, were also tied up in the same way and shot dead.

In Kotamarti village (Bhongir taluka), the enemy herded all the villagers including women, took them to the end of the village and stripping them of their clothes, beat them up terribly. They made them stand on thorns spread on the ground and covered them on all sides with branches of trees and set fire to them. The enemies were standing with sticks and rifles in their hands and were asking the people to sing the song written about Gaddapu Amin (a bearded sub-inspector of police, notorious for his cruelty). The sufferings of the people, with thorns under their feet and fire all round is indescribable.

A peasant, Ramachandra Reddy, from Ippagudem who had come to Ganapuram (Warangal taluka) had his body pierced all over with spears. They left him, thinking that he was dead.

In Dharmapuram tanda (Jangaon taluka), three Lambadis were made to collect firewood and set fire to it, and then they were thrown into that fire alive.

In Akkarajupalle, 22 people were speared all over and then cut into pieces and killed.

In Kodakandla (Jangaon taluka) they raided the place in succession and killed 30 people. This took place under the leadership of Baburao, son of the Visnur Deshmukh.

Destruction of Camps

With the increase in the number of enemy raids, the squads and the people took

up the programme of destruction of camps in order to arrest these raids and put the enemy on the run.

Attack on Atmakur Camp: There was a military camp in Atmakur village (Suryapet taluka) with 50 men in it. To the north and south of this place, in the nearby Epuru and Enubamula villages, there were big camps. To attack the Atmakur camp, guerrillas and local squad members to calling 100 and 600 people gathered near the village at midnight. With the help of village informers and *goondas* the enemy had forcibly made the people there keep watch all round. It was not possible for the squads to surround and attack the camp if those on watch gave an alarm and the enemy came out on the roads. On top of this, the enemy would have the upper hand and the squads would have had to take shelter in self-defence. So, according to the information received by them earlier, they planned out the raid. Some squad members without being seen by the sentries on watch, climbed the walls from one side of the village and entered it. Surrounding the camp, they shot dead the sentry on duty and simultaneously opened fire at others. At the first shot from the guerrillas, the other members and people wiped out the sentries on watch all round the village and entered it. They kept armed watch to prevent the enemy coming from nearby big camps. The enemy hearing the shots quickly went inside the camp house, locked themselves in and started continuously firing through the windows.

While getting into the house, two men died, hit by the squad's bullets. But afterwards, the squad's fire could not reach the enemy. The squads had surrounded the house, and finding that they were not able to smoke out the enemy, decided to throw hand grenades through the windows. But just then one comrade in great excitement, in his eagerness to hit the enemy through the windows, went running along the wall across the windows. He was hit by an enemy's bullet in the neck and fell dead on the spot. It was morning by then. The squads carefully brought out the dead body. They tried hard to throw the grenades but due to the alertness of the enemy, could not succeed. At the slightest sound near the windows, they used to fire. The guerrillas tried till 10 in the morning and then called off the attack.

Attack on Errapadu Camp: This attack took place after great preparations. Jannareddy Pratap Reddy's house was like a big fortress and a camp was put up in that house. The local people and the squads were anxious to destroy that camp. They thought of blowing up the whole fort. So, armed with crowbars and pickaxes, about 2,000 people went there at midnight. They approached the house and kept sentries on all sides of the house and roads from where the enemy was likely to get reinforcements.

They had brought three country cannons (*jhajjayi*) which they set up on carts and tied up with ropes and chains, fixing them in proper positions facing the houses, and fired one of them. The cannon went off with a loud bang which shook the surrounding area but the shot went astray without hitting the wall of the fort. The cart got broken because it was not secured at the time of firing

the shot. With this experience, the squads tied up the other cannons with more ropes and chains to a banyan tree and fired them. These shots could only shake the walls but did not even make a hole. Everyone was disappointed at this failure. (From that day, it was called the cannon plan. It had become a commonplace to call a well-prepared plan which turns out unsuccessful or one which appears to be impossible, a *jhajjayi* plan).

But in spite of all this, the attack was not given up. People started digging with their crowbars and pickaxes at the places where the cannon shot had hit the wall. Even the crowbars bent against the strong wall, but the people went on with their work. On one side, there was a chance of a gap being formed in the wall. The enemy who were stunned and confused with the cannon shots had recovered by now and some of them had got up with arms on the battlement and were looking all over, when one of the squad members shot two of them with his rifle before they could get down. One of the squad leaders got the cannon cart near the wall, and from that cart threw a hand bomb at the enemy group inside the wall. People all round the cart were carrying on digging work. The squad leader did not think it necessary to ask the people near him to move away. He just threw the bomb at the enemy, which unfortunately hit the top of the wall and fell back on the people and local squad members near the wall. Two died on the spot and 12 were wounded very severely. That happened as the day was breaking. With this, the attack was called off. All of them taking the dead and wounded, retreated to a safe place, four miles away. Two of the wounded died while being treated. The rest were sent to a safer place about 30 miles away under armed protection and with proper arrangements, in spite of the military camps in the surrounding areas. (This fortress was later razed to the ground by the people, as the news of the Indian Army marching into the State was received.)

Destruction of Kodakandla Camp: Kodakandla is a village in Jangaon taluka, on the border of Suryapet taluka. It was a big *Razakar* military centre. The Suryapet taluka squads decided to destroy the centre. At dead of night, in great numbers they surrounded the village. At dawn the fight began. The enemy was firing back taking the cover of walls and did not allow the squads to enter the village. Remembering the Kotapadu experience, the squads set fire to the *Razakars'* houses to smoke them out. The enemy gave up the battle front and retreated. The squads entered the village. But the enemy taking cover behind house after house, resisted. The squads pressed ahead towards the camp, destroying the enemy route.

The guerrillas divided themselves into small groups of four each and went ahead, at places entering the houses and finishing off the enemy. Those houses which they could not enter were set on fire with the enemy inside. They killed all men who fell into their hands. The guerrillas appealed to women to clear out and not a single woman got hurt. Fighting at every step, and at every house, the squads reached the camp and surrounded it. There, also, a fierce battle took

place with the military. At last, the building was set on fire and destroyed. This great battle went on till the evening. The enemy suffered innumerable losses. The squads found 15 corpses which the enemy could not take with them while running away. Upto 50 wounded were counted by the people. Fifteen .303 rifles, one sten-gun, many muzzle-loaders and spears were captured. The squads came out victorious without any losses. They had shown their courage, bravery and fighting skill.

Attack on Mushtyalapalli Camp: The squads went to attack the Mushtyalapalli camp (Bhongir taluka). But it was dawn by the time they reached the village. The enemy found them and started firing on the squads, who were approaching from three sides, and halted them. The enemy had taken shelter behind the houses on the fringe of the village. They had set up guns on the walls and fired at the guerrillas. It was daybreak by then. The squads had to take cover in self-defence. But they did not turn back. They fought on from behind the ditches, canal bunds, etc. One of the squad members, unseen by the enemy, moved on to one side and fired shots at the enemy gunner, who fell dead and the gun was silenced. The squad rushed forward firing furiously at the enemy. Four more enemies were killed. The squads set fire to the houses where the enemy was taking cover and forced them to retreat to their camp, which was a big bungalow.

The lorries in front of the bungalow were set on fire. But the squads could not enter the bungalow. Fighting till 7 in the evening, the squads turned back. In their discussion, after this incident, they came to the conclusion that the failure in this attack was due to lack of proper planning, the fact that they had reached the village at daybreak. That the squads with small numbers attacked a big enemy camp with 150 members in it, killed 5 of them and damaged one of their guns, shows the low morale of the enemy and the high pitch of courage shown by the people and the guerillas.

The attempts to surround and destroy the camps were made on a big scale. In many cases, the people were not successful, but there were many other successes and gains. The number of camps decreased, in the other camps the number of enemy personnel was increased. But the lesser the number of camps, the raids suffered by each village became less and less frequent.

The military and police used to be frightened all the time. Even while on raids, they used to be mortally afraid. People used to immediately destroy the camp buildings vacated by the military. Their only desire was not to leave any living space for the enemy. The camps used to be only in big bungalows. The guerrilla squads were helping the people, fighting the enemy and protecting the villagers. The raids from these big camps on villages became fewer and fewer, and the chances of raids on the villages during daytime became less and less. Thus they liberated the villages from the enemy's grip. The conditions of people in 3,000 villages thus liberated improved. They successfully carried out the political and economic tasks urgently needed.

We end this chapter with the narration of the martyrdom of a few leading cadre, whose life and death reveal a specific characteristic feature of the Telangana people's struggle at this stage, that could not be covered in the narration above.

The Story of Martyrs

Martyrdom of Comrade Prabhakar Rao and other Karimnagar leaders.

Comrade A. Prabhakar Rao belonged to Polampalli village (Karimnagar taluka). He took a squad of 30 members and came to Mandapuram village in Huzurabad taluka. They cut up the date and palm trees. They burnt the *patels'* and *patwaris* records and 'debt and promissory' records of the *deshmukhs* in the villages. Prabhakar Rao carried out this party programme in many villages and came back to Mandapuram with his squad. The villagers made arrangements for their food. When they were having their food, the reserve police came to that place on information sent by the village *patel* earlier, surrounded the village on three sides leaving the way to the hillocks open, and concealed some of their men there with the idea that when the squad tried to escape that way to the hillocks, they could be wiped out. The police dared not confront Comrade Prabhakar Rao's squad face to face, as it was a terror to the police. In many places they had suffered heavy losses inflicted by this squad. The police who were hiding, opened fire on the guerrillas as they tried to reach the safety of the hillocks. Those who had surrounded the village also chased them, firing all the while. The squad was encircled. But even then the squad, returning the fire, ran towards the hillocks. Prabhakar Rao with great courage faced the police. The leader's courage enthused the other members and gave them much confidence. They fought back hard. The police who were following them could not advance. A majority of the squad members could get to the hillocks safely. The squad leader, Comrade Prabhakar Rao, knocked down a policeman and killed him. But at the same time, a bullet from another policeman's rifle hit him in the stomach. Still, he fought on till his last breath. Another, Comrade Bhupati Reddy of Sirsilla, also like Prabhakar Rao knocked down another policeman and killed him, but he too died a hero's death. Another comrade, Damodar Reddy, from Nalgonda district, who was also an important squad leader, then with that squad, also died in this fight. Comrades Prabhakar Rao, Bhupati Reddy, Damodar Reddy and their followers, who were working for the people day and night, and were fighting the enemy in the Karimnagar district, had laid down their lives and became immortal. The district lost leaders in that fight from which it never fully recovered.

Martyrdom of Renigunta Rami Reddy of Bhongir and of His Squad

Martyr **Renigunta Rami Reddy** was an influential progressive landowner of Renigunta village of Bhongir taluka, Nalgonda district. He was active in the Andhra

Mahasabha. He became naturally the leader of the village. When the Razakars and the Nizam's armed police started their arson, loot and rape in the Telangana villages, he organised his village youth into a defence squad. He trained them to handle *bharmars* (muzzle-loaders) and shot guns. A number of times, he drove away the marauding *Razakars* not only from his village, but from all neighbouring villages. His village, as many other villages of old Telangana, had ramparts from where watch used to be kept for the approaching enemy. They were also defence posts without destroying which, no enemy could dare enter the village to loot or harass. Rami Reddy made it into an impregnable fort.

The Nizam's armed police force and *Razakars* in large numbers raided the village. Rami Reddy and his squad of 20 put up a stout defence. The resistance continued for hours. A number of *Razakars*, *goondas* and the Nizam's police were killed and wounded. But the enemy pressed on with the attack. Suddenly, the *tehsildar* of Kolanupaka, who had climbed up a nearby tree, and was looking for Rami Reddy as his special target, got an opportunity and rained bullets on him. The beloved brave leader of the people, Rami Reddy, was no more there to direct and inspire the squad. The ammunition was also coming to an end. The squad tried to get off the rampart and retreat but was surrounded and almost all of them were butchered to death by the cruel enemy.

But the heroic battle and the glorious death of Rami Reddy and the glorious sacrifice of his squad became an immortal saga for fighting Telangana—one of the most powerful ballads of battle was in his name, and it became a ringing household song, a battle song throughout Telangana.

Courageous Comrade Gopal Reddy's Heroic Fight

Knowing that **Comrade Gopal Reddy's** squad was in the village Patarlapadu (Suryapet taluka), some 100 military with 200 *Razakars* raided the village and surrounded it.

Squad leader Gopal Reddy aimed his rifle at the approaching enemy and fired. Two of them died immediately. The rest of them lay flat on the ground and threw a shower of bullets on the squad. Gopal Reddy advised his comrades that though they were surrounded, they must try to get out of that encirclement, but under no circumstances should anyone lay down his weapon and surrender to the enemy. He himself attacked the enemy line, firing at those lying flat and did not allow them to raise their heads. His squad members also followed him courageously in the same way. But the enemy fired with sub-machineguns, hundreds of shots from all sides and due to that the whole squad could not come out safely.

Gopal Reddy who was leading them got hit in the abdomen. But in spite of that, he kept firing till his last bullet had been used. Some more shots hit him in the neck and chest and he breathed for the last time. Four other members of the squad also died in this fight. Of these, two had got out of the encirclement

and were helping the others to get out safely, by taking the enemy's fire on themselves and not allowing them to fire at the other members. And due to this great courage of the squad leader and four other members, the squad of 15 which could have been wiped out, was able to save ten of its members. Six of the enemies also died in this fight.

The courage of the squad and its leader surprised even the enemy. The fact that the enemy, though greater in number, could not capture even a single guerrilla alive, the squad leader's heroic battle even after his intestines had come out on being hit by enemy bullets, and ten squad members getting out of that encirclement safely, all these had become a story for people's ballad and venerable worship.

All squads and people bowed down with grief at the death of these five comrades, took them as models of courage and heroism and pledged themselves to fight the enemy till victory.

Comrade Gopal Reddy was born in a poor peasant family in Atmakur village (Suryapet taluka). He had studied in the middle school but after that in spite of his wish to study further was unable to do so due to his poverty, and was working on the land. In 1946, at the age of 20, he joined the movement against the Nizam and came into the Party to serve the people. He was the village volunteer, the village leader; the had risen to the height of a central organiser and central guerrilla commander.

Many a times, he had fought the enemy in Atmakur, Enubamula, and other camps. The squad used to be present wherever the enemy was raiding, made lightning raids on the camps. They never returned without killing one or two of the enemies men. The enemy never slept soundly without fear in the camps. Sometimes, the enemy used to fire their rifles all night just because of reports that the squad was somewhere near. Gopal Reddy was a terror to the enemy. Even now the people sing of his heroism in a song written by them, 'Sai Sai Gopal Reddy'. Many had named their boys after Gopal Reddy.

Immortal Hero Comrade Pasunuru Venkata Reddy

Comrade Pasunuru Vankata Reddy of Nalgonda taluka had left the college in the Quit College movement of 1947, and had joined the people's struggle. There the people's movement was then at its peak. He had gained the love of the people, who used to affectionately call him P.V. All of them with one voice used to praise his courage, strong will-power and the urge to serve the people. P.Vs squad was a terror to the landlords and the enemies of the people. He had destroyed many enemies and collected many weapons. The police had concentrated their attention on destroying his squad. The military on horses was chasing him. When he was alone in Annaram village, the military, on the basis of information given by an informer, came there and killed Comrade P.V. and another comrade, Musuku Venkat Reddy.

Heroic Death of Comrade Ganugupati Narayana Reddy

Comrade Ganugupati Narayana Reddy, who was the area (*prantiya*) organiser, was carrying out the programme of the Party while fighting the enemy at every step. One day, in Solipuram village (Jangaon taluka), he was in the fields distributing the land and solving the problems that had cropped up. That was an open space without any protection and it was mid-day. The enemy was raiding the surrounding area in jeeps and came to that village. They concentrated their attention on Narayana Reddy who could be easily distinguished from the others. That comrade, even though unarmed, did not surrender to the enemy. He ran in a zig zag way so as not to get into the line of the jeep and the bullets. While near the lambadi tanda at Kootigadda, the enemy finally caught upon him, drove the jeep straight on him and shot him with vengeance. Another comrade of Akunur, Vadla Rajayya, who was with him, was also shot dead. The enemy took this as a great victory for themselves. The people in great grief and anger, pledged to take revenge on the enemy.

Comrade Narayana Reddy was born in a peasant family in Ganugupadu village (Jangaon taluka). He had studied upto the inter-mediate, and had worked as a headmaster in middle schools in Jangaon and Medak and had helped the students' movement. In 1947, he gave up his job during the non-cooperation movement and built up the movement in villages. In Khanapuram village, he had fought the police and snatched their weapons. He had many victories to his record. Even the name of this strong hefty comrade was a terror to the enemy. He used to solve the people's problems with great patience and had distributed thousands of acres of land belonging to the landlords and the Government, to the people. He had become the beloved leader of the people.

Kandada Balireddy's (Lakshmidevigudem) squad and Kodandarama Reddy squad raided the notorious *Razakar* camps at Gundrampalli in January 1948. The enemy in this camp had murdered a large number of peasants in villages all around. In the raid 10 *Razakars* were killed. This gave tremendous confidence to the people of the whole area. The camp was liquidated.

After a few weeks, Kandada Balireddy's squad was betrayed by a disgruntled villager who had been reprimanded earlier by Balireddy for some misbehaviour. Two lorryloads of *Razakars* and armed police surrounded the squad at night in Lakshmidevigudem, and captured 12 members of the squad, including Balireddy, Chakali Rajayya and Gowada Venkayya of Raghavapuram and shot them dead.

A few days after the Gundrampalli camp was raided, the *Razakar* leader who escaped and Pasam Pullareddi, a notorious landlord of Kaparti, attacked Aregudem, a nearby hamlet, and shot dead four peasants on the plea that they gave food to the guerrillas.

In Bollepalli village, 6 farm-servants (names not available), Ravi Raghava Reddy and his minor son, who was a good singer and was organising the *Bala Sangham*, were shot dead by *Razakars* in 1947.

These were terrible blows, but the people of Bhuvanagiri (Bhongir taluka) licked their wounds, reorganised many more fighting squads and fought many a battle against the *Razakars* and the Nizam's military and later against the Indian armies and their agents.

Comrade Seshagiri Rao, The Leader of Kothagudem Mine Workers

Comrade Seshagiri Rao hailed from the Andhra area. Even as a student, he was attracted to Communism. He became a full timer of the Party. Under the instructions of the Party, he had gone to Kothagudem and started building the mine workers' union. Within a short time, he won the respect and confidence of the workers. He was forced to go underground during the *Razakars* terror regime in 1946–1947. The police and their agents were always frantically searching for him. He was caught hold of by the Nizam's police but escaped from their custody while he was being taken to the district headquarters and rejoined the squads near Dornakall. But again after a few months he was going to Bhadrachallam through the forest paths from his secret headquarters. On the way at Tumala cheruvu, based on information passed on by some betrayer, he and his companions were arrested and shot dead. For a long time, even the news was not allowed to leak out to the public, because the enemy was so much afraid of his popularity with the mining workers. They expected serious trouble from them.

Death of Comrade Madhava Reddy

Comrade Madhava Reddy came from a small landlord family of Madhira taluka. He was a college student in the Hyderabad city. He quit college and joined the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party. He was daring and full of initiative, made many trips between Khammam area, from the State Party centre near the border, to the Hyderabad city, carrying literature and important instructions. He became the political leader of his area. He was good with his stengun and rifle and was a capable guerrilla squad leader.

One day, he went to the Kalakota village to settle some dispute between the agriculture labourers and the rich peasants. A section of the agricultural labourers were under the influence of a missionary school teacher. This missionary school teacher was purchased by the Nizam police. On that day, this teacher planned that his followers in the name of discussions of the dispute, should surround Madhava Reddy and murder him.

Comrade Madhava Reddy did not suspect any treachery. He knew them well. So he was not on the guard. His deputy did not like the way the discussions were going on and the teacher's behaviour, and cautioned Madhava Reddy to be careful. But suddenly, Madhava Reddy's stengun was snatched away and he was pounced upon and knifed. The deputy and his two companions ran a few yards and threw a crude bomb at that crowd and were able to escape.

But the party lost one of the most promising young cadres and a revolutionary.

Later, the squad was able to kill the teacher and some of the leading rowdies who were responsible for this murder and thus avenged Madhava Reddy's death. They raided a nearby *Razakar* camp and wiped out the whole lot to avenge the murder of Madhava Reddy.

Comrade Erra Satyam

Coming from a rich peasant family of Cheemirela village of Huzurnagar taluka in Nalgonda district, Comrade Erra Satyam joined the Andhra Mahasabha in 1946, and not caring for his parents' opposition, he worked on his fields during the day and gathered all the *harijan* youth during the night, politically educated them, enthused them with news of struggle and organised them under the red flag. He conducted their struggles for minimum wages against the local landlords and because of this, became the bitter enemy of the landlord class.

Two hundred policemen raided his village at the invitation the local landlords and he was arrested. But he tricked them and came out. Directly he went underground and continued his work, now not only in his village, but in all the surrounding villages.

With the starting of the armed resistance, he organised a guerrilla squad and began fighting back the *Razakars* and the police goondas of the fascist Nizam. Gradually, he developed into a general commander of all the guerrilla squads in his area. He led struggles against the well-known *zamindar* of Anantagiri, Deshmukh of Buddavaram and Lakkavaram Venkatareddi, and distributed hundreds of acres of land and thousands of bags of paddy to the poor. He was a party organiser, a guerrilla leader and a mass leader, respected by one and all in about 30 villages.

One night, he and his squad were traversing the fields. He felt that something had bitten him. After a few minutes, as he started feeling giddy, he realised that a poisonous snake must have bitten him. His colleagues tried to carry him hurriedly to the medical hide-out where anti-snake serum was also kept. Comrade Erra Satyam tore a piece of paper from his pocket note book and wrote on it, 'Comrades, I am taking leave from you all for ever. Here is my gun. Do not allow it to fall into the hands of the police but use it to destroy the enemy. Adieu!!' He lost consciousness and by the time the squad, by relay marches, reached him to the medical centre, he had passed away. The Party and his colleagues dipped the red banner in memory of this hero, whose last thought, the last exhortation was 'destroy the enemy'.

Comrade Yadagiri

Comrade Yadagiri was born at Chilapokunta village in Suryapet taluka, in an agricultural labourer's family and was working as a labourer in Jannareddi Pratap Reddy's house. Seeing the people's sufferings, he joined the village guerrillas.

He had fought very heroically in the Kandagatla and Kotapadu fights. The enemy used to be frightened at the sight of him in military uniform, he being a man of strong, hefty stature. After being arrested and taken to Mundrai camp in the raid on the bus and military lorry at Tirumalagiri, he was tortured horribly for days. They thrust pins under his nails, cut his flesh with blades and put chilli powder in the wounds. The military men used to sit round him, smoking cigarettes, burning him all over his body. He was hung by the toes, beaten with sticks, boots, rifle-butts, etc. The tortures were indescribable. But in spite of all this, Comrade Yadagiri did not bend and did not give away any secrets. 'I have pledged to destroy you traitors, I shall not bow down before you. Even if I die, my *Sangham* will carry on its work and destroy you. To torture an arrested man is not a heroic deed, but give me a rifle and see where your heroism will be.' This was his answer. The comrade's courage and persistence astonished the enemy. One day, the military officer made him sit in front of him and advised him to join the military as he was a young, capable man and would get all comforts. But the comrade abused him and spat on his face. Immediately, the officer ordered his men to tear him to pieces. They tied up his hands and feet and slowly fired at him at every limb, one after the other. Even at that moment, Comrade Yadagiri never bowed down to them but instead shouted at them that his *Sangham* would take revenge and destroy them. He is immortal.

4

Telangana People's Armed Liberation Struggle Against Nizam—its Achievements

From the narrative so far, we see how the people of Telangana, suffering from age-old, dark, feudal oppression, from forced labour and illegal exactions, from a cruel and hated feudal rule, their language and culture suppressed, groaning under a cruel, corrupt and autocratic rule, groped their way slowly towards a new life. They started out for some elementary relief in their miserable life; no *vetti*, no illegal exactions, no land evictions, no torturing and dishonouring; for elementary civil liberties; for education and culture and for responsible self-government. It developed under the leadership of the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha into a powerful armed people's struggle for land and liberation, against feudal exploitation and against the hated Nizam's rule. It spread to about 3,000 villages, to nearly one-third of the Telangana area where *gram raj* (village panch—people's self-government) fighting committees were established. The Nizam's officials, the hated landlords, had to quit the villages, leaving the panch committees to carry on people's administration. Not only *vetti*, illegal exactions, land evictions, usurious loans, torturing and dishonouring by corrupt officials and village oppressors were put an end to, waste lands and surplus lands of the landlords, to the extent of a million acres, along with the necessary cattle and agricultural implements were distributed to the rural poor; fair wages for agricultural labourers were enforced and grain produced by this toil was distributed along them. People used to say that for the first time in their lives, they could have two full meals a day. Regular guerrilla squads and village defence squads were organised, the Nizam police, army and the village oppressors were confined to big camps; only from there could they go on their forages during certain hours of the day. Even the enemy press had to admit that the Communists were *cheekati doralu* (kings at night) meaning thereby that it was the writ of the Communists that prevailed after darkness fell, while the landlords and the police ruled only during daytime.

The whole of the Nizam's state and hit society were shaken to their roots. The movement was spreading to more and more areas, to the whole of Telangana and beyond. It was at this juncture that the Indian Government decided to intervene, to send its own army on the plea of curbing *Razakar* violence on the people and making the Nizam accede to the Indian Union, but also with the main declared purpose of suppressing 'Communist violence'.

Before we go on to review the 'police action' of the Indian Government, and the course of development till the Telangana armed struggle was withdrawn, and its aftermath, let us analyse what lies behind this success of the Telangana people's great upheaval. As Sri Suravaram Pratap Reddy, the doyen of Telangana journalists, one of the leaders of the Telugu renaissance in the Hyderabad state, himself coming from a big landlord family, exclaimed in great admiration:

'What *Indrajalam* or what *Mahamantram* (the great magic) these Communists possess, with which they have transformed the very same people who used to say 'Oh Lord. I am your slave: I prostrate before you and touch your feet', into heroes, creating great heroes from nothing; from inert mud'.

That power, that secret of the Communists, was the slogan of 'land to the tiller'. The Communists proudly raised that burning question and stood with the expectant and fighting peasant masses and guided them to enforce it in practice. They fought and laid down their lives along with these peasant masses.

'Land to the Tiller'

This slogan had become an urgent practical reality by the sheer pressure of the developing movement.

The movement started with asserting that no peasant be evicted from the lands he had been cultivating, and won significant victories, beginning with the successful safeguarding of Ailamma's crop from the Visnur Deshmukh. Later it became a statewide slogan of action: 'all evictions be stopped and land seized by the landlords be restored'.

The peasants, whose lands were seized earlier by the *deshmukhs* on various flimsy grounds, such as failure to pay accumulated debts due to ever-increasing burden of usurious rates of interest, or non-payment of rents, or by sheer arbitrary evictions because the landlords wanted to grab the lands and make them their own, raised the question of restoratio n of these lands. From the slogan, 'all evictions must be stopped', it was not a far cry to come to the conclusion, 'all illegal evictions and occupations must be cancelled'. The need for the unity of all the peasants whom earlier the landlords had evicted and whose land they had occupied, and those peasants who were now being evicted by the very same landlords, was an urgent practical task. So the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party without hesitation took over the slogan of the peasant masses, 'restore the illegally occupied lands to the original peasants'. This spread like wild fire.

This slogan gave rise to innumerable problems for the panch committees and *Sangham* organisers. The landlords had leased the land to some other small peasants or had sold it to them; as such it was not possible, in all cases, to restore these lands back to the original owners, as the new owners were also small or peasants, though comparatively well-to-do, who were in our front fighting against the hated landlords and the Nizam's rule. Even where the organisers and panch committees offered them other equally good, fertile, or even better lands

owned by the same landlords, as compensation, the peasants used to say, 'give these to the present occupants, but restore to me my paternal or my hereditary lands'. It was with great difficulty that an acceptable solution to the two contending peasants could be found. The principle adopted was to settle it by reconciling both, but not coercing them to accept any forced solution from above. The need for unity, the pressure of public opinion, helped them to come to adjustments.

This factor, of the peasant's insistence on getting back his old land was, an important factor to be kept in mind. Maybe it was due to his sentiment for his property, 'it is mine', while the new land that was being offered was that of the landlord, or it might be due to his confidence that if he was in possession of his own land, it was a justified right and no one could take it away from him. On the other hand, if he took the land of someone else, he felt that the equal guarantee of 'rightfullness' or ''certainty of permanent ownership' was not there. Further it was noted that the peasant could be moved more easily on this question of re-occupation of his own lost lands than on making him go to occupy the surplus lands of the landlords. It was also a feature after the Indian Union army intervention, when the landlords and *deshmukhs* were being brought back, that the peasants much more easily gave up the surplus lands they had been cultivating, but till the end, fought doggedly to retain those restored lands of their own. In fact when the struggle was withdrawn, most of the land which was even then in the possession of the peasant masses, were these 'restored lands', leased lands and waste lands that had been newly cleared or occupied and cultivated by the rural poor, while a good portion of distributed surplus land was taken back by the landlords.

Waste Lands

Similarly, the 'land-hunger' of the rural poor, with land as the only source of some guaranteed employment for a considerable period a year, made the agricultural labourer and landless poor peasant occupy waste lands under the Government or under the occupation of the landlords. It was, and is even now, also a mark of respectability or a basis for getting credit and other facilities. Though these lands were more difficult to cultivate, and it was also difficult to raise large crops without greater inputs and irrigation facilities, still lakhs of acres were occupied. The old regulation that 10 per cent of the village waste lands were to be kept for communal cattle grazing or for other communal purposes, was ignored. Similarly, cultivable land in the forest belt was also occupied.

The Government tried its best to take back these lands after the police action, but failed miserably. They tried to put up the shepherds against the *harijans* and the agricultural labourers, telling them that if these waste lands were allowed to be cultivated, there would not be land for their cattle or sheep to graze. But all such obstacles were overcome by the Telangana peasant movement. The battle even now, after 20 years, to get the *patta* rights, the ownership rights, title deeds

on these lands, continues, the Government gradually conceding this demand of a larger and larger number of these cultivators.

Surplus Lands of the Landlords

But the occupation of waste lands and prevention of evictions as well as restoration of old illegally-seized lands did not satisfy the demand for land, of the land-hungry rural poor.

Thus, the question of taking over the land of the landlords had become a real and practical issue before the movement. Politically, it was easy and necessary to confiscate the lands of these big *deshmukhs*, *pattadars* or *jagirdars* and get them distributed. But to satisfy the land-hunger to some extent or the other, and strengthen and consolidate the fighting mass base, it had become necessary to actively consider taking over all the surplus land.

This move began with the taking over of land in excess of 500 acres. Politically, it was argued and accepted by the Party leadership that there were some big landlords who were with us fighting the Nizam rule. To keep that section with us, we should keep the ceiling sufficiently high. Further, it was also kept in mind that in the election pamphlet, 'People's Raj in Visalandhra', in Andhra, in 1946, the Party had given the slogan of 100 acres ceiling, with adequate compensation for the land taken over.

But as the movement in Telangana developed, and the demand for land became more and more insistent, the land ceilings were reduced to 200 acres and finally, by the middle of 1948 itself, to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet. In Telangana, it was a general feature that practically every owner had some wet and some dry land in his holding. Taking one acre wet as equivalent to 10 acres dry, the Party had ultimately hit upon this 10 acres wet and 100 acres dry land as the ceiling. But when implementing it, the question was raised whether this applied to a joint family having a number of grown-up adult male members (brothers) or for a single family with minor children and dependents. It was clarified that this 10 wet and 100 dry acres should be the maximum for a family even if it was a joint one, taking into consideration the extreme need of having enough land for distribution. But at the same time, it had to be kept in mind that we should not seize the lands of those who were likely to be in the movement. But before these explanations could be given and they could be implemented, the 'police action' had intervened. Compare these with the ceilings the Congress Government proclaimed later on.

The ceiling which the Government in Hyderabad announced was 50 acres wet or 250 acres dry. Later the Congress Government reduced this to 27 acres wet or 216 acres dry. These ceilings were far higher than what the Telangana movement sought to impose. And, of course, many loopholes were there, the Act was never implemented, and no surplus land was ever taken and distributed by the Government.

Yet the landlords were allowed to sell their surplus lands to prospective buyers.

Further, protected tenants had the first option to purchase the land at lower prices. In the Telangana area, quite a large amount of land was purchased or retained by tenants. Of course, even in Telangana, by 1960, 50 per cent of the protected tenants had been evicted, most of them in those districts and areas to which the Telangana movement did not spread or take deep roots.

The ceiling which the Party advocated in Andhra, in the 1946 election pamphlet, was evidently born of a reformist understanding. It did not analyse the actual class differentiation and evolve a suitable agrarian programme. In Telangana, the slogan that the Party should have popularised was that the land of the landlords who indulged in feudal exploitation, exorbitant rents, usurious interests and other illegal exactions, and who were hand-in-glove with the Nizam and *jagirdars* and big *deshmukhs*, would be confiscated. But those who would side with the anti-Nizam movement, would be left with enough land to earn a decent living cultivating it with their own family labour and employing a certain amount of wage labour. The concretisation could have been more prompt, depending on the development of the movement; the Party could have boldly implemented land distribution and the sweep of the movement could have been far wider.

It is important to note here that the taking away of the surplus land and its distribution were resorted to, when the pressure from the fighting masses became insistent, and permission for it was obtained from the Polit Bureau, with some reluctance, during the latter part of 1947. At that time, the Party leadership was following the policy of building a front with progressive Congress sections against the narrow Vallabhbhai clique (national front) in the name of strengthening the independence achieved in August 1947.

Was it Right to have taken to Land Distribution?

Later, Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and quite a number of his supporters challenged the correctness of distributing the land. Of course, all of them are now in the Right Communist Party (CPI). Their argument was that knowing well that we would not be able to retain the land so seized and distributed, without the people's democracy in the whole of India, as the Congress bourgeois-landlord Government would not allow such distribution, even in one state of Hyderabad; it was a premature step.

They argued further that the seizure of land and distribution had come from the wrong slogan given by the Party at that time, viz., that the Telangana movement was a liberation struggle even against Nehru and the Indian State, the Yenan of India, the beginning of the people's democratic revolution, as in China. The slogan of land seizure should be advocated only as a part of the liberation struggle programme. They argued that we should have confined ourselves to: 'against evictions, for rent reductions' but not advocated revolutionary seizure of land.

It was true that our Party in Andhra at that time decided to continue the

Telangana armed struggle against the Indian Government, which had sent its armies mainly to suppress the Telangana peasant movement, as a liberation struggle. Its understanding that this was the beginning of the Indian revolutionary armed struggle for people's democracy was wrong, because such a situation and correlation of forces did not exist at that time.

But the Telangana movement developed from small partial demands to partisan armed struggle to enforce these demands, and later it also developed into an armed struggle to overthrow the Nizam's rule itself. The *gram raj* committees were in fact organs of struggle and, at the same time, organs of power. But with the Indian army's entry and the merger of Hyderabad state into the Indian Union, a different state, with an entirely different correlation of class forces came into existence. So, the liberation struggle against the Nizam could not become automatically transformed into a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government of the Indian State.

Even so, the question of defending the land and other gains of the Telangana peasantry was there. So it was correct to have carried on armed resistance against the attempts of Nehru's armies to seize back lands from the peasants and give it to the landlords. Such armed resistance to defend the partial gains or enforce partial demands is a partisan struggle. Such partisan struggles should not be confused with the partisan struggles carried on during the period of armed liberation struggle. Every partisan struggle is not necessarily a liberation struggle.

Our Party obtained all this clarification only when its delegation met the leadership of the international Communist movement and Comrade Stalin, towards the end of 1950 and the beginning of 1951.

But to argue, as Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy did, that land seizure and distribution during that period was wrong, is sheer bourgeois reformism and tailism.

We have seen how the Party had to take up the question of land distribution from the very real practical needs of the movement, in fact, only under the pressure of the fighting peasantry.

It was because of this correct step that we were able to inspire the Telangana people, especially the peasant masses, the backbone of the agrarian revolt, to carry on the dogged fight against the Nizam and his cruel minions, the *Razakars* and other armed personnel, against the brutal terror and violence that had been let loose. It was this that enabled the Party and the AMS to stay on in the field in Telangana, while the Congress and every other force was forced to flee to the Union territory.

Later, to retain these gains in land distribution, the Party correctly called upon the Telangana peasants to continue their armed fight when the landlords who returned with the help of Nehru's army, tried to seize the peasants' lands. The fight continued for three more years after the 'police action', and it was this fight, in spite of heavy sacrifices, that brought about the Hyderabad Tenancy Act, the most radical piece of land legislation till then, apart from other big democratic and revolutionary gains which we have already outlined in brief.

If the Party had not confused it with a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government, it could have adopted different tactics to enforce an early negotiated settlement for partial solution of the land question and would have achieved greater successes, or at least withdrawn with lesser costs and sacrifices, keeping the Party and AMS organisation in greater cohesion.

Our Central Committee as well as the meeting of important cadres of Telangana in March 1952 categorically rejected Ravi Narayan Reddy's argument and came to the conclusion that it was correct on our part to have continued the armed defence of the land gained, and if we had not done so, the peasants would have considered us as having betrayed them. Here is what Comrade Ajay Kumar Ghosh, the then General Secretary of the party, said in conclusion at that meeting:

'Before I conclude my speech, I will explain my opinion about the Telangana struggle. There is a section arguing that immediately after the entry of the Congress Government armies into Telangana, the armed peasant guerrilla struggle should have been withdrawn. I consider it wrong to lay down arms immediately after the entry of the Indian Union armies. The issue that faced the Telangana peasant struggle at that time was whether the peasantry that won the land and democratic rights after a bitter struggle, were to surrender them without a fight and hand over the lands to the *deshmukhs* and to the landlords? Or were they to continue armed peasant guerrilla resistance to the extent necessary to defend them? In my opinion, to continue the resistance is the revolutionary path and to lay down arms is the path of betrayal of the people.

'Another argument that is brought out in support of withdrawal of armed guerrilla struggle at that time is that all the lands or a major portion of the land was seized back by the landlords and *deshmukhs*. Even if it was so, it is my firm opinion that to withdraw the armed peasant guerrilla struggle is not correct on that ground. If we had withdrawn the armed struggle, the peasantry would have considered that our Party leadership had betrayed them. In fact, it is in reality a betrayal.'

'Then what should we have done? What changes ought we to have made? It was wrong to fight with the object of establishing revolutionary people's power, for overthrowing of the Nehru Government. It should have continued as armed guerrilla struggle being waged by the peasantry, and for land to the peasantry. When the people still in general had illusions about the Nehru Government, to continue to fight with the immediate aim of overthrowing the Nehru Government would not help to mobilise the broad masses of the people. That is why we should have changed that slogan. Even if the enemy had been able to seize back all the land or a major portion of the land, the Telangana struggle has got tremendous revolutionary significance. We have learnt great lessons from the Telangana struggle.

'One very important fact it has proved or brought forth: that the Telangana peasant armed struggle has not only been able to fight the weak and demoralised

Nizam's forces, but has also been able to fight the Congress Government's armed forces, well-equipped with modern weapons. The Telangana peasants fought for three years against 30,000 to 50,000 armed personnel. Even after three years, the Government has not dared to say that it has been able to suppress it. So Telangana has blasted the wrong conceptions that Nehru's armies are invincible (or are so strong that it is not possible to defeat them). Thus, the Telangana peasant armed guerrilla struggle has demonstrated the strength of peasants' guerrilla struggle and their revolutionary potentialities. If the working class had joined hands with it, and in some other areas if the peasant struggles had reached that same level, we can imagine what great developments might have occurred. This is the greatest lesson of our whole revolutionary experience. We must study these lessons carefully.

'But then there arises another question. When should it have been called off? I cannot just now definitely say as to exactly when it should have been withdrawn...' (Translated from Telugu).

But, unfortunately, Comrade Ajay Kumar Ghosh did not follow the above precept nor study the experiences of the Telangana struggle, but took to a different course of action that immensely contributed to the weakening of the movement not only in Telangana but throughout India, and put the whole Party on a totally reformist path.

The urge for land and the tenacity with which the Telangana peasants carried on this fight can be seen from the following example of the old peasant in Komatlagudem village of Huzurnagar taluka, who refused to concede that the land belonged to the landlord, and continued to maintain the sentiment, 'this land is mine". He was tied hand and foot and put on an ant-hill by the military and the police brutes of the Nehru Government, for three days till he was eaten away by the white ants. But the old peasant never once as long as he was conscious, gave up his claim, 'this land is mine'.

Formation of Gram Raj Committees

In the villages, there was no Nizam Government rule during the movement. The majority of the village officers and the hated *deshmukhs* had run away from the villages. Some of them had begged for mercy and forgiveness from the guerrilla squads and from the people, and had stayed on promising to abide by their rule.

The village administration was carried on by the committees elected by all adults in the village. These were called 'Gram Raj' Committees (panch committees).

Men and, women were elected to these committees, and so were the leaders of village squad, consisting of five or seven members. The Gram Raj Committees used to solve the people's problems, keeping away from the earlier prevalent evils of corruption, bribery and other dirty methods. In this work, along with the committee members, many ordinary people used to take part. All the problems were solved in a democratic way. The moderates, the right wing, who sowed

confusion, and the enemy elements were given public trial and were punished befitting their crimes. The Gram Raj Committees used to warn them, socially boycott them, levy fines or confiscate their properties according to the nature of their crime. Those who used to move about with the police and carry out attacks on the people were given suitable punishment.

Agricultural Reforms

The agricultural reforms were carried out successfully. The lands which were confiscated by the landlords and the moneylenders, even twenty years previously, under the pretext of loans not paid, under threats, or under the pretext of taxes not paid, or for some fines levied under some false 'charges,' were returned to the original owners.

The landlords had deprived the people of good lands and instead had given less fertile lands to them. This order was changed under the agricultural reforms. Tenants were given full rights on lands they were tilling. Landlords were not entitled to receive rent or compensation on these lands. The *kauldar's* (tenant's) land was declared to be his own. He did not have to pay anything for that land. In both these methods of land distribution, along with the agricultural labourer, poor and middle peasant, the rich peasants, and in some cases even small landlords who were one with the people, had also benefited.

A ceiling was fixed on land and the rest of it was distributed to agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Some of it was distributed to middle peasants also. A big discussion took place on what should be the ceiling. The first decision was that only lands in excess of 500 acres should be distributed. After that, it came down to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet or 20 acres of wet land, and that was the final decision. The distribution of land was done according to this.

This concerned only those landlords who were not inimical to the people. Those who were the people's enemies were deprived to the last acre of their lands. And all these were distributed free of cost to the people. This took place in every village.

In Suryapet taluka, in 110 villages around Errapadu and Epuru, 20,000 acres of land belonging to the landlords were distributed. In all the 3,000 villages to which the movement spread, 10 lakh acres of lands, surplus lands, *anyakrantalu* (illegally seized lands), leased lands, waste lands and *porombokes*, forest and grazing lands, were distributed with full ownership rights to the rural poor and middle peasants. In Errapadu and Epuru areas alone, one lakh acres of Government land were distributed.

Distribution of Cattle

Along with the lands, the extra cattle belonging to the landlords were also distributed among the people. The whole cattle herds of people's enemies were completely taken over and distributed. Their number was in tens of thousands.

The cattle from one area were driven to another and distributed, to prevent the enemies taking them back in case of raids.

In Epuru and Errapadu areas alone, the cattle sent to other areas and distributed amongst the people, came to more than 2,000. This will easily give one an idea as to how many cattle were distributed in the fighting areas of Telangana.

Along with the cattle, agricultural implements were also distributed to the people. They had received goats and sheep also in good numbers. All these were free of cost.

Cancellation of Loan Deeds

Loans which were given to the people by landlords, *deshmukhs* and moneylenders were cancelled. In every village, these loans, either in cash or grain form, ranged anywhere from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000. With the cancellation of the loans, the people got rid of a big burden. In the areas surrounding Epuru and Errapadu villages, the amount of loans cancelled was about eight lakh rupees, which will give one an idea of the people's burden, and the relief they got.

Increase in Wages of Agricultural Labourers

The agricultural labourers in these villages, sometimes through strikes and demonstrations for increase in their yearly and daily wages, and by bringing pressure on the peasants through their representatives in the village committees, succeeded to a great extent in getting their demands met. The daily wages were increased from 2 to 3 kgs of grain to 4 kgs and the monthly grain salary of farm servants from 40-60 kgs to 80-90 kgs and in certain cases, even 120 kgs. Noteworthy here is the fact that rich peasants, despite the tremendous gains they got from the united struggle against the Government and the zamindars, and the major role the agricultural labourer played to achieve these, were reluctant to increase the daily wage of the agricultural labourers. They used to give many reasons to avoid it. The rich peasants and the capitalist landlords used to strongly resist the increase in wages. That was why the strikes and demonstrations of agricultural labourers became inevitable, especially so after the 'police action'. And it was only after these strike struggles or threat of strikes that real increase in their wages took place. With the land received and the increase in wages, a remarkable change came about in the political consciousness and mode of living of the agricultural labourers. People in these villages used to say that for the first time in their lives, they were having two full meals a day.

Other Facilities

Under these *gram rajyams*, the people received many other benefits.

a. There was no government agent to collect taxes and the money remained with the people.
b. The Party and the *Sangham* had understood the opposition and dissatisfaction that had come over the toddy-tappers during the programme of cutting down

toddy-yielding palmyra trees and date trees. So this programme was given up. On top of this, they were told to tap the toddy, give good toddy at cheap prices to the people, and not pay any taxes to the Government. This was appreciated by the people and it brought about good results.

c. A programme of digging irrigation canals and, small tanks for agricultural betterment was taken up and carried out.
d. Medical facilities and health care, and training the people to observe the minimum hygiene was taken up on a wide scale. Especially in villages where cholera epidemic was raging, the people were given proper help, inoculation, etc., Many villages were supplied with medicines on a large scale for prevention of diseases. It was while rendering such medical relief that Comrade Gone Venkatayya of Kotamarti village, a promising local organiser in Bhuvanagiri taluka, became a victim of cholera attack and died.
e. Peasants whose houses were burnt down during the struggle were supplied with wood, palm leaves, grass, et cetera, to rebuild their houses. These were taken from the palm groves of landlords and government forests.

Equal Rights for Women

In this struggle, women had participated equally along with the men and due to this, it became easier for the *Gram* Committees, *Sangham* and Party to campaign against the age-old ideas prevalent in the society that women were inferior to men. The Gram Raj Committees proclaimed and campaigned that men and women had equal rights. Women were elected to the Village Panch Committees. The local people used to know very well the conditions of the families or their relations with each other and so it was possible for the Gram Committees to amicably settle family disputes, bring about reconciliation between them, settle questions of compensation for running away with someone else's wife, according to the prevalent customs in certain centres; prevent unwilling marriages, i.e., girls being forced to marry persons whom they did not like, and in deserving cases, giving divorce and making the new couple lead a respectable life.

Abolition of Untouchability

Caste distinctions were deep-rooted in the villages. In the struggle against the Government all people were forced to work and fight collectively without any distinction of caste and creed and so after this, fighting the evil of untouchability became easier. In the guerrilla squads, equality and mutual respect were strictly practised. And this practice changed the ideas of the people.

Belief in Gods, demons, et cetera, had decreased to a great extent. It had disappeared noticeably specially amongst the youth.

Cultural Progress

Political propaganda used to be carried on extensively. Right from the Gram Committees, village squads, to organisers and regular guerrilla squads, everyone

used to explain every problem in mass meetings. Along with this, there used to be many cultural items, such as *Burra Katha, Gollasuddulu* (shepherds' singsong) *Vuyyala Pata* (cradle songs), *Kolatapupata* (sing-song dance with small wooden pieces held by dancers which are used to produce rhythmic sounds) and *bhajans*. Many songs were written about every problem, about big incidents during the struggle, about the martyrs and about the atrocities of the enemy, their defeat, etc. These were not written by learned poets but had come from the ordinary people themselves in the form of folk songs. They used to be very melodious and capable of rousing the masses. Even the artists were not trained ones but the people used to go about in squads giving performances. These programmes and singing of songs used to take place not at any fixed time or place, but anywhere, any time, and wherever it was possible and necessary. The guerrilla squads used to exhibit their military knowledge before the people. Local squads also used to take military training every day.

All these programmes were watched by the people with great interest and enthusiasm. Sometimes, their enthusiasm used to lead them into the programme itself.

Cowherd boys used to give these cultural programmes and organise military drill also. Due to this, sometimes, serious accidents took place.

In Chilapakunta village in Suryapet taluka, these cowherd boys were once enacting a drama. One of them had become Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy, the vicious landlord and another one a notorious Razakar, Abbas Ali, and the rest of the boys were guerrillas. The actors who played the part of the landlords were badly mauled. Similar mock plays were enacted in innumerable places.

Even when the enemy raids were at a peak, the adult literacy programme was taken up and carried on. Village committees and village squads were not only learning themselves but were also teaching others. They used to learn whenever they found some time. Many illiterate persons in the squads were able to read newspapers and books after a few months. Because of the political consciousness, many were ready to learn and they did it in quite a short time. This could be done successfully because it was looked upon as a political task.

These tasks were carried out by the village committees according to the principles and instructions laid down by the higher committees. The village squads used to give their full support to this. And the organisers and the guerrilla squad used to be always ready to help all of them.

The guerrillas being always ready to resist and fight the enemy, the land cultivation in the villages went on undisturbed. They hid their grains and money in the grain pits scattered all over the fields to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. There was no fear of thieves. Even if small thefts took place, the village committees and guerrilla squads used to look into the matter and return the stolen articles to the owners.

Trade with Towns

Village committees had to make arrangements to carry on trade with towns and

regular supplies of essential goods and supplies were brought from the towns and the produce of the peasants were disposed of in the towns. Because the towns were the centres of enemy concentration, a certain amount of bribing and understanding with the Nizam's officials had to be arrived at by the village traders or their counterparts in the towns. Further Gram Raj Committees could not clamp too many restrictions and start suspecting these traders or interfering with their trade as possible enemy agents.

It was through this trade that some essential raw material for making gunpowder or even crude bombs could be gathered.

Once, when currency shortage threatened to block this trade, ideas of barter came to the forefront.

But the contact and normal trade with towns had not been very much interrupted, mainly because the enemy did not feel it necessary to block them and prevent trade. The difficulties that arose were mainly due to the fear of loot, insecurity from the *Razakars* and the corrupt Nizam's police, and their propensities to make illegal gains. Further, there was the short supply of goods in the cities and towns themselves due to the general conditions of insecurity.

In the villages, Gram Raj Committees through their local squads, kept small crime under effective control. The overall attitude of the people to such crimes kept the usual criminal in check. Some anti-social elements indulging in such activities were caught by the people and the squads and were duly dealt with.

The Military Aspect of the Struggle

The most satisfactory and inspiring aspect of this activity was the discipline and devotion of the village squads and the greater degree of these qualities in the regular squads. But for this, the movement could not have reached the sweep it did during its anti-Nizam liberation phase, nor could it have sustained itself in the face of the tremendous losses, in both the phases, and especially the shattering losses it suffered during the Indian military terror regime of 1948–1951. This discipline and devotion had become possible because they were closely linked with the people's movements. These squads came mainly from the toiling sections; they were fighting for the removal of their grievances and sufferings, which meant they were fighting to get rid of accursed conditions of living. Naturally, the people helped them in all ways, billeted them in their homes, or fields or in huts, at their irrigation wells scattered all over the fields, comparatively safe shelters, dispersed far away from the villages, when the villages became the concentrated targets of the ravaging hordes of *Razakars* and Nizam's armed police, and later of the Indian Government's police, armed personnel and landlord goondas and home-guards. The people loved the guerrillas and respected and praised them. The guerrillas felt they were one with the people and they must do everything to help the people and not harm them or harass them and, if necessary, lay down their lives for the cause of the people.

This is the secret of that amazing discipline, devotion and capacity to bear such great hardships and the readiness to make sacrifices.

During this whole period of five years, in thousands of actions and raids on the houses of the landlords or their agents, there were practically no complaints, or surprisingly few complaints of misdeeds on the part of the guerrillas. Every bit of property, supplies, articles, jewellery or cash confiscated from the enemies' houses were meticulously accounted for, and forwarded to the higher committees. Rarely had any action against any enemy or his agent been taken without proper direction from the local committee or the organiser's direction and decision. The squad commanders implicitly obeyed the instructions of political organisers and directives.

There was no insecurity women or molestation of women, no maltreatment of old men even belonging to the enemy. Generally, the instructions were: do not hurt women or children even when the guerrillas are taking action against the enemy. If certain actions had been taken against women in certain cases, it was because these women rushed against the guerrillas endangering not only their action but their safety itself. There might have been some rare cases of reprisals against women as a check to the most cruel officer's or landlord's mentality. But such cases were promptly criticised by the higher committees or senior comrades as harmful to the movement and severe warnings were given not to repeat such incidents.

To illustrate the discipline and *corps d'esprit*, the following two examples are enough. I give them from my own experience.

Guerrilla Member and Toddy

We were on the way to the Krishna River forest areas to reach our political headquarters of that region in July 1951. We had to cross over a hundred miles of plain area before we could reach the safety of the forest. The police and Home Guards had infested this whole route and area. The squads could march only during nights. They avoided every inhabited point on the way, and walked across the fields and stony wastes, so as not to leave any trace of their movements. After nearly three years of starvation and suffering, it was amazing to see the capacity of the squads to march practically the whole night covering distances of 20 to 30 miles carrying rations, supplies of arms, et cetera, weighing about 15–20 kgs.

Suddenly, I noticed a squad member lagging and with great difficulty keeping pace with the marching squad. The squad leader told me that he had developed sudden heat and was passing urine red in colour. Our water stock was over. We had to go quite a distance before we could reach water. If that squad member could only be permitted to drink a pot or two of toddy, which was readily available as we were passing through date and palm-groves, he would be alright within a short while. I exclaimed, why not? The squad leader replied, 'The orders are that no guerrilla should drink toddy. Disobedience of this order would entail serious

punishment'. As such, only the 'area leadership or you, as an important comrade from the State Centre, can give the necessary permission'. I readily gave it, assuring him that I would explain the matter to the area committee. That was the magnitude of personal discipline, especially if we remember that drinking toddy is quite a common habit among poorer sections in the Telangana area.

The area committee leadership told me how just a few weeks before, all their supplies were cut off for nearly two months by military and the armed police, sealing off all forest routes to the villages. The squads had to be content with rationed *bajra* (small millet) gruel (1/4 litre) twice a day, for days, even without salt. The squads were hungry and becoming weak. Yet, the sentry used to take up hit position half a mile away across bunds and boulders and hillocks in these mountains. It was with great difficulty that this essential task was being adhered to. Sometimes, one or the other squad member fainted due to exhaustion, yet the comrade-in-charge of the kitchen used to keep the sentry's share of the ration, hot and ready meticulously. So, a hungry man was in charge of tempting gruel awaiting the man on duty.

Story of Comrade Mudireddi Venkatachalam: 'Only Telangana Guerrillas Can Dare Do It'

Comrade Mudireddy Venkatachalam came from a middle class peasant family of Repalle taluka, Guntur district. He used to work in the fields and graze cattle in the islands of the Krishna River. He was accustomed to swim in the Krishna even when it was in floods. He was attracted to the Communist movement in that area, quite early. When the Congress regime let loose brutal raids and terror in Andhra in 1948–1949, and murderous assaults on the party cadre were started, the Party gave the call to retaliate in defence. When it became too difficult to stay there in the face of police terror they were asked to retreat to the forest areas and join the fighting Telangana guerrilla squads. He was one of them.

One day, in July 1951, in the Devarkonda hills, near the Krishna River, I was talking with the area leaders. A hundred yards away, I saw a normally clad young man having serious and prolonged discussions with two lambadi young men. After an hour or so, they left the place. That evening, our area leader came to me downcast and broke the news that Comrade Subbayya (his assumed name) was washed away in the Krishna River, and narrated the tale.

Comrade Venkatachalam was entrusted with the job of crossing the Krishna and contacting a guerrilla squad on the other side and escorting it back to safety to Telangana, from the dangerous situation in which it was pressed in the Andhra area. The two Lambadis were the expert swimmers delegated to help him cross the Krishna River. But, unfortunately, on the day scheduled for crossing the Krishna it was suddenly in high floods. The expert lambadi swimmers advised against crossing the Krishna at that hill spot, and either to wait for a few days, till the floods subsided; or go downstream 50 miles, and cross it there from the plains and walk back on the other side of the river to the rendezvous with the

squad-in-danger. This was impossible; they would certainly fail to keep the appointment and the squad would be in great peril of being annihilated by the closing in of the enemy. He appealed to the lambadi swimmers not to fail the Party, but be prepared to risk their lives to carry out its command, and save the lives of the 10-member squad. The lambadi comrades gave up their objections when the Party was mentioned.

All three took hold of dried logs and jumped into the roaring Krishna. Comrade Venkatachalam was swept into the mid-current while the other two were buffeted back to the bank. They again and again tried to reach Venkatachalam but failed. They saw Venkatachalam being dragged down under the water by the swift current but he was gallantly coming up with a firm hold on his log of wood. They sorrowfully followed him from the bank and when they lost sight of him, they returned to convey the sad news. It was just a little distance above the present Nagarjunasagar dam.

We were all aghast. To have lost such a comrade? Was it right for us to have allowed him to attempt crossing the Krishna risking the lives of three comrades? Should we have given up the rescue operation and risked the lives of a whole squad? That problem was not referred either to the area leadership or to me for answer or for direction. Comrade Venkatachalam and those two devoted lambadi party members solved it themselves.

What a joy when four days later, in the evening, we saw Comrade Venkatachalam. Leading the squad he came and saluted us. We embraced him, plied questions about all that happened. He said, 'Nothing extraordinary, Comrades. I did not lose heart, stuck to my log of wood and reached the other bank. The shepherds there helped me and guided me to the rendezvous. After the floods subsided, we crossed the Krishna. The whole squad is here safe and sound'.

But the leader of that squad interrupted him and narrated the story as he had heard it from the shepherds. Comrade Venkatachalam was desperately swimming. He was approaching a small water cataract and whirlpool. The shepherds shouted urging him to the last desperate attempt, threw their tied-up cloth rope and long bamboo for him to catch.

If he was dragged down the cataract, he would have certainly died. Comrade Venkatachalam swam; caught hold of the bamboo and reached the bank and was saved.

He was trying to explain to them but they cut him short, 'Comrade, you need not. We know who you are. You are a Telangana Communist guerrilla. Only a Telangana guerrilla can dare attempt crossing the Krishna in these high floods. Take rest tonight here'. Comrade Venkatachalam refused and explained the job on hand. They marched the whole night, reached the rendezvous as scheduled and contacted the squad.

We were all happy. When the Telangana struggle was withdrawn on October 21, 1951, and in spite of the promises, no amnesty was declared, Comrade Venkatachalam was explaining to a village gathering the necessity of voting for

the Communist candidate (PDF). The police suddenly surrounded it and shot Venkatachalam dead.

Such was the devotion and sacrifice of the great Telangana fighters, inspiring generations to come and illumining their path for a successful people's revolution, for a new society.

Weaknesses

There were lapses. A number of times, the sentries posted not in the mountainous areas but actually in the plains, during the anti-Nizam struggle and during the first few weeks after the Indian army's intervention, failed to be alert at their post and as a result, guerrilla forces had to suffer tremendous losses. This could have been avoided, if only more training for this especially important task, more political consciousness and more awareness of this duty had been imparted.

The biggest weakness, from the military aspect, was lack of any kind of military training: knowledge of use of fire-arms, its manufacture or its repair was so dismally poor that even great enthusiasm and sacrifice could not overcome it. Elementary lack of military tactics, for planning attacks or retreat, was so glaring that we failed to coordinate small guerrilla squads' actions against the enemy. Prolonged, hour-long pitched actions against the enemy and their camps, with great numbers of enthusiastic but disorganised masses, used to take place. Hence we suffered serious losses or were forced to retreat in the face of determined defence of the enemy, or be on continuous run before the military raids. We could not combine and develop small-scale guerrilla actions of harassing the enemy, into sufficiently large-scale operations to drive out the enemy from their scattered posts and clear the enemy from larger and larger areas.

Nor were we able to capture any worthwhile number of modern weapons from the enemy by destroying them, till the Indian military intervention. Then the *Razakars* and the Nizam's armed forces were in panic and on the run which enabled our squads, helped by the mass upsurge, to seize quite an impressive number from the panic-stricken and fleeing *Razakars* and from their camps. But, by then, we had to contend against the well-trained and disciplined Indian army, in an entirely different political situation, which had become more unfavourable to us.

If only we had had some kind of military training, a minimum supply of modern weapons, our movement in Telangana could have been far more widespread; perhaps the whole of Telangana would have been capable of fighting militarily in bigger numbers, company or battalion level; could have been in a far better position to meet the onslaught of the Indian army and, perhaps, given correct political strategy (of treating, in that phase, the Telangana armed struggle as peasants' partial struggle for land and not liberation struggle against the Nehru Government), could have won and retained great successes on the anti-landlord agrarian front. Leave alone the prospects of sections of the army or police revolting and joining the fighting peasantry.

It is a wonder that in spite of the miserable weakness in this respect, the spontaneous rising of the people and these squads springing from them, on the spur of the moment, with whatever little guidance which the Communist Party could give them at that time, could achieve such great success, shake up the Nizam rule and keep the Indian army and the Government at bay for such a long time. It was like the Paris Communards 'storming the heavens'. But unfortunately we could not draw the proper lessons from this Telangana struggle even for developing the future revolutionary movement.

Working Class and Urban Centres Not in Action

One of the biggest drawbacks during the whole of the Telangana movement was the weakness of the democratic movement in the cities and towns in the Hyderabad State. There was very little industrial development in these cities, as such the working class was very small. Whatever existed, there was very little organised working class movement, and in what was there our Party was even weaker. There was little growth of the intelligentsia, and a good portion of whatever existed were from the big feudal or other landlord families. They were pro-Nizam. With autocratic feudal rule, and the whole administrative and police and military services dominated by Muslim recruits and persistent suppression of every liberal democratic expression, it was strange that the democratic movement did not grow in the cities. Whatever radical student movement was there, that also became quiet after the militant students left the cities to join the fighting peasantry.

When the postwar mass upsurge started in Hyderabad, the cities and towns lagged far behind. The enemy made them his base for military and police operations. They had become strong fortresses and bases for the hated landlords and their agents who had been driven out from the villages. It became difficult to develop the democratic or working class movement during this period, in these cities.

There were no solidarity struggles in support of the fighting Telangana peasantry. No big demonstrations, no hartals, no general strikes, not even sabotage actions, nor reprisals on the enemy; not even counter-intelligence on the enemy moves.

It became difficult to carry on the struggle in the rural areas, with practically no support or action from the cities. To procure essential supplies, even medicines, became a serious problem. They had to be brought from big cities and towns from the Indian Union territory.

Whatever little contacts we had, it rendered yeoman service to the Telangana movement. They helped us to organise houses, places for a number of underground offices from where we could keep some contact the with neighbouring fighting regions. Some supplies and some arms also could be procured. But we had to do it at great financial expenditure and also our underground centres were blown up repeatedly. Valuable cadre were arrested, tortured and some shot.

Even this help and support helped us considerably in the fight. If this also had not been there, it is easy to imagine how much more our Telangana movement would have been hamstrung.

The Telangana movement was essentially a peasant partisan movement. It could not be developed into a real united worker-peasant onslaught on the enemy. The weakness of the democratic movement, and especially the absence of the revolutionary working class movement and the Communist Party in the cities persisted. But during that time, the impact of the huge Telangana upsurge upon the toiling masses and middle classes was there, and all their sympathies were with that struggle.

No All-India Solidarity Action

By the time the Telangana peasant movement assumed its armed partisan character, and later a liberation character against the Nizam's rule, the postwar upsurge in the rest of India had been more or less successfully contained by the ruling classes. Political power was transferred by the imperialists to the Indian bourgeois-landlord classes. India had become independent. The Congress leadership was able to integrate the states into the Indian Union by promising privy purses and privileges to the princes, and by rousing the hopes of alleviation of grievances and of a new era to the people of the states. Effectively the states' people's struggles were halted. By striking at the Communist movement in its strongholds, Kerala, Andhra and Bengal, it tried to hamstring whatever possibilities of developing the revolutionary movement were there and of rousing the rest of the country to emulate it.

In that situation, the sectarian policies followed by our Party had further isolated it from the people. As such, no real solidarity actions in support of the Telangana movement could be organised. And by the time the Indian army intervened in the Hyderabad State, it was left to fight on its own. Only in the Andhra part of the Madras state, the Party and the people had become the rear of the Telangana struggle. Here the Congress Government launched a ferocious attack to liquidate it; the first attack in the first half of 1947 and the second attack beginning from January 1948 and lasting till the middle of 1951; and from the beginning of October 1949, they carried out physical annihilation, calculated murder of about 300 Communist leaders and cadre after arresting them.

The story of Telangana cannot be complete without at least briefly going over the struggle of the Party and the democratic movement in the Andhra rear, nor proper lessons for the development of the revolutionary movement even in the future can be drawn.

A brief outline of the movement in the Andhra area is given in latter chapters.

5

The Communist Movement in Andhra: Terror Regime—1948-1951

Historical Background

Andhra is a contiguous area to Telangana. Now in 1971, it has a three-crore population and 12 districts. The 12 districts in the Andhra area can be divided again as follows; Circar or coastal districts (8); Rayalaseema districts (4); with the nine Telangana districts, now they constitute Andhra Pradesh. The boundaries now are: East—sea coast; South—Tamil Nadu, West—Karnataka; North—Maharashtra; North-East—Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

Andhra had a predominantly peasant economy. While the Circar districts were comparatively more developed economically, socially and politically with a number of projects and other irrigation facilities, the Rayalaseema districts are backward in all respects, with a backward agriculture, no big projects and more domination of feudal relations and oppression. There were hardly any big industries except in Vizagapatnam district, where the shipbuilding yard owned by the Scindias and two jute mills owned by Europeans were situated. The rest of the working class was mostly dependent for its livelihood on petty industries such as tobacco, mica mines, foundries, rice and oil mills, etc. Ninety per cent of the whole population lived on agriculture in villages.

Communist Party

The Communist Party in Andhra was officially organised in September 1934. The development of the Communist movement in India was a terror for the imperialists and they banned it in 1934, even before its branches could be organised in Andhra.

The Communists, while working in the Congress organisation, conducted agitation on the demands of agricultural labourers and poor peasants in the villages and the working class in towns, and could build up their independent base among them, to a considerable extent.

Forced by the anti-fascist war situation, the imperialists lifted the ban on the Communist Party in 1942. Communists could now operate legally, and they directly plunged into the battle against fascism. While ceaselessly campaigning for the release of Congress leaders and formation of a National Government they

took up the day-to-day issues of the people: conducted agitations, led deputations, organised demonstrations, and held meetings on such issues as supply of agricultural implements, repairs of tanks, roads and canals, against black market and for strict price controls, against hoarding and corruption. They led a number of agricultural labour struggles and the 'grow more food' campaign. In the towns, wide support was mobilised behind the working class demands and the Party led some of their strikes successfully. Volunteers of the Communist Party were able, in many towns, to successfully unearth the hoards of black marketeers, and force the Government to distribute them among the people.

The Communists fought on the political, economic and social fronts, on issues concerning every section of the toiling people; on peasant demands for fair price for his produce, for supply of agricultural implements and fertilisers; on working class demands for supply of all necessities of life at controlled rates and increase in wages; on student demands for supply of white paper, kerosene at controlled rates, against detentions, for amenities-such as tiffin sheds, rest rooms, in the educational institutions; on women's demands as provision of separate sanitary facilities in villages, for maternity and welfare centres, for strict implementation of the anti-child-marriages Act, for educational facilities and for equal rights; on middle class issues against high house rentals, housing scarcity, etc. In one word, wherever and whenever people were in difficulties, there you could see a Communist with a red flag on his shoulder. That was a common phenomenon in those days.

All through these campaigns, the main political task of the people—the struggle against fascism—was specially stressed and achievements of the Soviet Union were widely popularised. For carrying on a ceaseless campaign for the release of Congress leaders, a large number of our leading cadre were kept in prison all through the period.

It was this constant and ceaseless work on people's issues, close ties with the people through thick and thin, that enabled the Communists to rally 100,000 people at the All-India Kisan Sabha Conference, held in Bezwada in 1944 and the next year, 50,000 to the Provincial Kisan Sabha Conference in Tenali.

These ever-growing activities and increasing influence of the Communists was a bitter pill to the Congress leaders, mainly coming from the liberal, landlord sections, who had just come out of jails. They realised that if the Communists were allowed to grow at this rate, their social order of class exploitation would be at an end. So, under the open instigation of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and N. G. Ranga, all-India Congress leaders, raids were organised on party offices, attacks were made on individual Party members and important leaders, and the Party rallies were disturbed. The Communist Party sensed the danger underlying these goonda attacks, organised the PVB (People's Volunteer Brigade) and gave the slogan: 'defend the people', 'beat back the goondas', and 'expose the reactionary Congress'. Under the leadership of the anti-Communist fire-eater Ranga, the Party and mass rallies in Krishna and Guntur districts were attacked. There

was not a single meeting, demonstration or cultural performance that was not attempted to be disrupted by them. But, thanks to the timely sensing of this menace and immediate mobilisation and defensive actions, they were everywhere put on the run, the Party was saved and the revolutionary movement was defended and extended.

Elections and After

World War II was terminated with the smashing of the Nazi Germany and the fascist Japan. The working class in India began to rise. There was a gigantic mass upsurge and a huge strike wave, highlighted by INA demonstrations, the RIN Revolt, the All-India Postal Workers' strike, etc. The British imperialists saw this as a challenge to its colonial rule and in order to divert the attention of the people from the revolutionary path, announced elections to provincial legislatures.

In Andhra, the Communist Party put up 35 candidates (in half of the total constituencies) and fought the elections with the two main slogans of 'land to the tiller' and 'Vishalandhra in a people's India'. *Goondas* were freely employed against the Communist election campaign and the Congress Justice Party-zamindar alliance littered money all over to buy votes. Unashamedly, they sought police and goonda help to frighten the voters. But the party rallied PVB volunteers and the Congress volunteers and goondas were kept at bay.

The results of the elections showed that the Communist Party was the biggest and the most influential party, after the Congress in Andhra. The party polled 2.5 lakh votes in all, and 22 per cent of the total votes were polled in the constituencies contested by Communists. In the strongholds of Krishna and Guntur districts, the percentage was 35 and 25 respectively, of the total votes polled. And, at the time, franchise in India was limited to only 13 per cent, the vast mass of toilers, who form the bulk of the supporters of the Communists, were deprived of their voting right. It was not a surprise, therefore, that Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya gave a statement warning Congressmen not to be complacent and run mad after their victory but note the dangerous significance of the Communist vote.

Congress Ministries took up office when the entire situation was like an erupting volcano. The post-war 'crisis had deepened, prices of daily necessities of life had shot up sky-high; more and more were swelling the ranks of the unemployed; the black marketeers, capitalists and landlords, who made bumper profits out of the war by fleecing the people, were reluctant to pay any attention to the workers and agricultural labourers who had become extremely restive and begun agitating for their just demands.

A wave of strikes swept Andhra, both in the villages and the towns. Agricultural labourers and farm servants in hundreds of villages struck work, demanding increase in their yearly and daily wages, wages in kind to be given with correct measures, for holidays and regular hours of work. The peasants in

Munagala and Challapalli occupied the zamindari lands and began to fight the repression that ensued.

The strike of ten thousand tobacco workers (which broke out the very next day after the Congress Ministries took office); strike by one thousand textile workers of Pandalapaka, the cart-pullers in Rajahmundry, and the cigar workers and a host of other workers belonging to other trades came out on the streets on strike who; of particular importance was the province-wide strike of 20,000 municipal workers, who were paid a pittance of Rs. 4.72 per month.

All the above strikes and especially the municipal workers' strike exposed the Congress 'people's Government' in its true colours. Instead of conceding the most elementary and minimum demands of the workers, the Congress rulers, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, the British imperialists, let loose their police force, imposed Section 144, ordered lathi-charges, raided the *bustees* of municipal workers and arrested scores of militant workers. The biggest of the Congress leaders in Andhra came out as strike-breakers and swept the roads. The Congress Government pleaded, 'We came to power only four months ago'. The workers replied: 'You have got time and money to raise your own salaries from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1500 but to pay a few rupees more to us, you lack time and money?' At times, the strike of municipal workers reached such heights when workers, for example in Rajahmundry, came into clash with the blacklegs and Congress volunteers.

Such was the black record of the Congress 'people's Government' in the first six months itself. Why this dogged refusal of the Congress Government to concede the demands of the toiling people, and resort to brutal repression? It was nothing but their class interests and the growing fear of class revolution.

The above struggles were conducted under the banner of the Andhra Provincial Trade Union Congress, the only Andhra-wide trade union organisation which was led by the Communist Party. The Congress leaders were afraid of the growing forces of revolution. For, what was the position of the Communist Party at the end of 1946?

As a result of its all-sided mass work, the Party was able to draw over to its side the wide strata of urban poor and the rural toilers, especially the agricultural labourers and poor peasants, for whose rights the Party was fighting ever since its inception in 1934. It could stand face to face with the Congress in the elections and poll 2.5 lakh votes.

It had organised separate class and mass organisations of workers, agricultural labourers, kisans, students, youth and women and championed their rights. It made the people realise that it was only the Communist Party that could doggedly defend their rights and not the Congress in power. This feeling of the people found expression in the words, 'the future belongs to us' And the class enemy, too, could not but see the truth.

The Party came out as the stalwart defender of the toilers' rights by leading their day-to-day struggles on urgent economic issues. The Communist Party stood

against all injustices, inequality, and suppression of fundamental rights. Such was the influence of the Party in the villages that not only on economic demands, but for every trifling matter such as kerosene or rice ration cards, or excess municipal taxes or some social injustice, et cetera, they used to rush to the office of the Party and seek redressal of their grievances.

In the social sector, it had fought the devil of untouchability. Members of the Party shared food with untouchables, lived with them and shared their sorrows and joys. Moreover, the very nature of the class struggle was such that it had unified the touchables as well as untouchables under one banner. Marriage ceremonies were simplified, doing away with priests and *mantrams*; widow-remarriage and inter-caste-marriages were widely popularised and members of the Party were always in the forefront. Equality between men and women was advocated.

A new culture was introduced. The youth of the towns and villages were drawn into the new life of activity. They were mobilised under the flag of the Andhra Youth Federation, the only organisation of its kind. They participated in games, yearly sports on the occasion of national festivals, joined volunteer squads, trained themselves in the use of lathi, took part in drama and *burra katha* squads, and were also imbued with the fighting consciousness against imperialism. The Communist Party's name had become so synonymous with 'good youth' in the villages that even some of the old folks in the houses used to prevail upon their sons or grandsons to go and join the Youth Leagues so that they might be schooled and disciplined as good citizens.

The Communist Party had revived languishing cultural forms like *burra katha*, *veedhi bhagavatham*, et cetera, and through them approached the masses. Hundreds of squads and drama groups functioned all over Andhra. Through these cultural forms, stories of peasants' lives, biographies of national heroes, militant struggles of the Andhra people, heroic exploits of the Soviet guerrillas, were all popularised. The number of people that attended the cultural performances ranged from 3,000 to 10,000. There were many instances when the middle class people and intelligentsia preferred to attend a *burra katha* performance to a cinema. This had changed the tastes of the people so much that the professional dramatists had to adapt themselves to this change, partly giving up their religious and 'ethical' performances.

Through innumerable mass meetings, through *Prajasakti*, organ of the Communist Party, the peasants had been politicalised; they came to know much about the Soviet Union, the fortress of socialism, and about the heroic struggle of the Chinese people. Prajasakti Publishing House (PSPH) published a record number of nearly 300 books on various topics: politics, theory of Marxism, histories of various countries, literature, science, economics, short stories, dramas, *burra kathas,* et cetera, which no other organisation could do up till then. On every burning problem of the people and the country, on every significant event in the international field, PSPH came out with a pamphlet and constantly kept

the people abreast of events, and brought the general masses to a higher political level.

The following figures of membership give an idea of the development of the Communist Party and the various mass organisations during 1945-1946.

Communist Party	20,000	(in 2,000 villages)
Andhra Prov. Kisan Sabha	175,000	
Andhra Prov. *Agri.* Labour Union	60,000	
- Do - Students' Federation	12,000	
- Do - Youth Federation	50,000	
- Do - Manila Sabha	20,000	
- Do - Trade Union Congress	30,000	

Thus, in spite of certain reformist mistakes and politics, the Communist Party in Andhra became a broad mass party, came forth as the champion of the toiling masses, as the unquestioned leader of the workers, as the builder of the revolutionary peasant movement, as a staunch fighter for social justice and as the beacon light of a new culture in Andhra.

It was this widening mass base and influence of the Communist party that made the Congress leaders in power panicky. They saw in the growth of the Party the impending doom of their class exploitation; they noticed that more and more people were rallying under the banner of the Communist Party and their own base was shrinking. In order to save their exploitative regime, their moneybags, their staunch supporters, the zamindars and landlords, the Congress Government swooped down like a mad dog on the Communist Party in Andhra.

Black Act Promulgated-Repression Begins

The Prakasam Ministry, which was then in office in the Madras Province, promulgated the 'Public Safety (*Prajarakshana*) Ordinance', popularly known as the 'Public Disaster (*Prajabhakshana*) Ordinance' on January 22, 1947. Hundreds were arrested and detained without cause, without trial. Offices of the Communist Party, trade unions and Kisan Sabha were raided and records were confiscated.

Here it is necessary to note that the Communist Party was neither preparing for the overthrow of the Government by force, nor was it indulging in violence of any sort, as was slandered by the Congress Government. The Party was just championing the day-to-day interests of the workers, of agricultural labourers and poor peasants; it was leading their struggles for their just demands, the elementary rights of the people even in a bourgeois parliamentary democracy. And for this 'crime' the Congress Ministry replied with this Black Act. Thus it was the Congress Government that started the unwarranted offensive against the Communists and the people and not the other way round, as the Government shamelessly propagated in its lies later.

The democratic, toiling masses could not tolerate this foul offensive on the

fundamental rights of the people and the parties. Ten thousand workers in Rajahmundry came out on a one-day strike demanding unconditional release of their leaders. The railway workers of Bitragunta and other centres also stopped work. Workers in Bezwada, Guntur, Pandalapaka, Vizag, Chittavalasa, the Kisan Sabha and the Agricultural Labour Association sent strong protest notes against this arbitrary action of the Government and demanded its withdrawal.

Nor had they been cowed down with the detention of their leadership. The economic crisis, the pro-capitalist and pro-landlord policies of the Congress Government and the intensifying repression on the peaceful population, forced them into further bitter struggles.

In **Gajullanka** of Divi taluka, Krishna district, the peasants began to assert their right on the *lanka* lands (riverbed lands). What did the Congress Government, which waxed eloquent promises during the elections, do? It did not come to the rescue of the poor peasants against the high-handedness of the Challapalli zamindar, who after the elections had turned into a Congressman overnight, but went to the assistance of the *zamindar*, with its police force and opened fire on the unarmed peasants, killing four, including a woman leader, Viyamma, and wounding scores of others. And note again, it was not the Communist guerrillas that started the shooting, it was the Congress Government that fired the first shot on the unarmed people. It was not the Communists but the Congress Government that started the armed offensive.

In **Buchampet** of West Godavari district, the tribal peasants started a fight against the *zamindar*. The police came and shot dead four of them.

In **Kanur** and **Pandyala** and other centres of West Godavari district, the peasants stood against the oppression of the landlords and *zamindars*. The peasants' demands were so just that the Taluka Congress Committee and some members of the District Congress Committee came to their support and formed joint action committees. The Congress Government promulgated orders under Section 144 and lathi-charged the peasants. The landlords and the Government let loose *goondas* throughout the district. As a result of this free reign of the landlord-*goondas*, in **Pedapadu** village in another part of the district, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a militant peasant youth and a member of the Party, was killed.

In **Munagala,** an enclave of Andhra in the Hyderabad State, a traditional militant agrarian base, the peasants, under the influence of the sweeping land struggle of the Telangana peasants, seized 4,000 acres of *zamindari* lands. The police came and opened fire, killing two and injuring several others.

In **Divi** taluka of Krishna district, the peasantry in Challapalli estate occupied thousands of acres and the Congress police rushed to the aid of the zamindar and let loose terror on the fighting peasantry. In **Munagala** and **Challapalli** estates, over 50 were kept as detenus, besides the arrest of several hundreds of people.

Independence and After

It was constantly dinned into the people's ears that India had now achieved

independence and the condition of the people would be bettered. But the toiling masses found the real class character of this independence. The influence of the Communist Party went on increasing. Municipal elections were held all over Andhra only three months after the Mountbatten Award. The Communist Party contested these elections. In such important towns as Bezwada and Rajahmundry, Communists won 1/3 of the total seats. Altogether the Communists won 36 seats all over Andhra, in half a dozen municipalities.

These victories of the Communists, that, too, within 3 months of independence, made the bourgeois landlord Government panicky. As it was, the sweep of the struggles of the agricultural labourers, farm-servants, the working class and the peasantry during the one year of their rule in the provinces was a sufficient indication of the anti-people character of the Congress regime.

Heroic Telangana—A Constant Terror to the Congress Government

Another factor also added to the fear of the Congress Government and later made them mad still. That was the surging peasant movement in Telangana, just across the border.

Already in the 40s, Communists in Krishna district of Madras Andhra had come into contact with the disillusioned left-oriented youth in the state (Hyderabad) and ever since then, had been tirelessly working for the cause of the peasants, who were most feudally exploited and oppressed under the Nizam-Deshmukh rule. They took up such immediate issues of the people as *vetti,* illegal exactions, bribery, et cetera, and fought against the local *deshmukhs*. When the *deshmukhs* let loose *goondas*, people resisted and drove them back. Then the Nizam's police and military came on the scene. They began to loot the property of the people, commit arson, murder and rape on a mass scale. In order to save their hearths and homes and their own lives from the murderous attacks, people formed guerrilla bands and began putting up militant resistance under the political, organisational and ideological leadership of the Communist Party. The rule of the exploiters was coming to an end. Thousands of acres of land were being confiscated and distributed and people's committees were being established. The *Razakar* armies were let loose on the people. People under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party began heroically resisting the Nizam regime.

The Communist Party in Andhra, especially in the four coastal districts which were on the borders of Nalgonda and Warangal districts, served as a rear base for the Telangana fight. The Party in Andhra gave a call for all-out assistance to the struggle of the Telangana people against the Nizam, to help them overthrow the feudal regime and establish Vishalandhra. Thus, it sought to implement the election slogans of 1945-1946, unlike the Congress whose promises evaporated into thin air. The call was responded to on a mass scale.

The Communist Party, the Andhra Provincial TUC and the Kisan Sabha welcomed and organised relief for the people from Telangana who sought

protection from torture, rape and loot. The guerrilla fighters and leaders got the guidance and help they wanted. The whole movement was under the ideological, political and organisational leadership of the Communist Party. In the whole of Andhra, a national fervour to fight and liquidate the Nizam's rule and to unify Andhra had been roused. With what eagerness and readiness people came forward to help their fighting brethren across the border can be understood from the single fact, that in just three days, in Bezwada town alone, Rs. 20,000 were collected for purchase of arms for the guerrillas. The Communist movement and the Party had become the backbone of the Telangana people's armed struggle.

The play, *Ma Bhoomi* (Our Land), depicted the life of Telangana peasants, the exploitation of *deshmukhs* and the Nizam, police atrocities and the people's resistance and fight for land. This play was written to popularise the agrarian revolt in Telangana, and it played a particularly significant role in rallying the people to the assistance of Telangana. Two hundred squads staged this play all over Andhra, in villages as well as towns. Lakhs of people saw it: lawyers, doctors, intellectuals, scientists, Congressmen, cinema stars, writers, one and all acclaimed the play as most effective. The funds collected through the staging of this play ran into a lakh of rupees. The Ministers, prevailed upon by the Congress MLAs, invited this drama squad and got the play staged in the Rajaji Hall (Government House in Madras). They saw with their own eyes what a powerful message it was giving to the people and banned it afterwards, though they were praising it then.

Even the rabid anti-Communists had to reckon with the fact that it was the Communists who were really fighting the Nizam on the battle-field, while the state Congress leaders were fighting a 'ferocious' battle in the press from luxurious hotels like the Taj in Bombay, Woodlands in Madras, etc. The whole democratic press acclaimed the Communists as the real fighters against the Nizam. Even as late as in January 1950, a Telugu daily, *Andhra Prabha* of Goenka, commenting on the refusal of the Congress Government to form Andhra Province, wrote: 'It was the Communists that first started the fight for Vishalandhra; it seems it is under them only that the Andhra people will realise their cherished ideal of Vishalandhra'.

In the course of a conversation in Bezwada town, Congress leaders were being criticised by a person who desired strongly the creation of the Andhra province. The Congress leaders ridiculed him saying that he was talking like a Communist and joked, 'wait, the Communists will get you Vishalandhra'. To this, he retorted, 'It is the Communists that propagated the demand for Vishalandhra in 1946, and they have taken up arms and have been fighting for it during the last four years, while the Congress has been promising the Andhra province for the last 40 years and refuses even that much today'.

While on the one hand, the Nehru-Patel Government stabbed in the back of the fighting people of Telangana by entering into a stand-still agreement with the Nizam and agreeing to supply arms to this butcher of the people, the Communists,

on the other hand, were leading the people, fighting in the battle-fields and shedding their blood for the cause of the people, for the cause of Vishalandhra. This placed the Communist Party in Andhra not only as the workers' and peasants' leader but also as the champion and the unifier of the Andhra people.

Two Years of Terror-Rule in Andhra

It was on January 31, 1948, that the Madras Congress Government launched its long-prepared offensive against the militant people's movement in Andhra and its leader, the Communist Party. The assassination of Gandhiji, and the consequent clashes between the people and the RSS gang, were only an excuse to carry out its fascist offensive. That night, the police swooped down on the office of the *Prajasakti*, The Communist daily in Bezwada, the Party's City Committee office, and the offices of the Krishna District Committee and the Andhra Provincial Committee of the Party, and on the houses of many prominent Communists and their sympathisers and effected large-scale arrests. It hoped to bag the whole of the Communist leadership of Andhra—an extended meeting of the Provincial Committee was in session then, just after the Provincial Conference. But it failed in its objective in spite of its sudden swoop.

The reason behind this swoop, the first of its kind in the whole of India, was that the Communist Party in Andhra and the militant mass movement that was led by it and especially, the powerful people's movement in the Krishna district was the strong base of support for the Telangana people's struggle for liberation against the Nizam and his *Razakar* gangs. So, when the Government of India entered into the stand-still agreement with the Nizam, and when the Telangana Communists and the Telangana Andhra Mahasabha repudiated the stand-still agreement and continued to wage the struggle with even arms in hand, the Congress got frightened. It was determined to crush and extinguish the Telangana people's struggle, so that it might not become the beacon-light to the oppressed masses of the rest of India. So, while on the one hand, it was helping the Nizam by supplying arms, on the other hand, it prepared to clean up the rear base of the Telangana people's struggle in Andhra, especially in the Krishna, Guntur and Godavari districts.

After the first raid on the Communist and trade union offices in Bezwada, the Madras Government arrested 79 persons on the false charge of murdering one of the RSS men in the January 31 clashes.

How false this charge was and how it was just no more than a pretext to round up the militant leadership was proved when in the above case, after two years of delaying the trial during which time many of the accused were refused bail and kept in jail or under detention, ultimately only 17 were convicted for forming an unlawful assembly and sentenced to two to three months imprisonment, in January 1950.

The Madras Government continued its preparations to liquidate the people's struggle in Krishna. It concentrated its armed police, the Malabar Special Police,

in the Krishna District while the Government of India was massing the Gurkha and the Sikh battalions to intervene against the Telangana people's struggle under the proclaimed cover of protecting the Hyderabad people from the Nizam and his *Razakar* gangs.

In the Krishna district, the people's movement in support of Telangana became intensified. The mass of agricultural labour, in more than 400 villages, was preparing for strike struggles to win their demands. Their demands were 30 bags of paddy, 8-hour day and 30 paid holidays. The peasants in the zamindari tracts refused to pay rent to *zamindars* and demanded that their rent be scaled down and the *zamindari* system be abolished. The Madras Government resorted to mass raids, mass beatings, arrests, destruction of properties and utensils, burning and razing down of houses, rape and murder. The Congress Seva Dal 'volunteers' were pressed into service along with the Special Armed Police.

The usual technique in the raids was for a force of 200-300 policemen to surround a village during the night, not to allow anybody to go out from the house even to answer the calls of nature, gather men and women of the village in a cattle-shed and beat them, while some other batches of police entered the houses and began looting, breaking the furniture and utensils, tearing up sarees, shirts and dhoties to pieces and mixing dal, rice and pickles with kerosene and urine. They burnt and razed to the ground many houses, prevented cultivation of the lands of the Communist workers and their relatives. Agricultural labour hamlets were the special targets in these raids. These raids continued for full three months from May to July. Though the main concentration was in the Krishna district, raids took place in Guntur, Godavari and even in Kurnool districts as they all are on the border Telangana.

It was estimated that more than–

- 1,000 villages were raided
- 25,000 persons were beaten
- 10,000 were arrested (including those who were let off after a day or two in police custody)
- 15 women were raped (those known cases where women came forward and exposed the brutalities of the police)
- 10 were murdered by the police and the Congress Seva Dal 'volunteers'
- Rs. 500,000 worth of property was destroyed.

In the agricultural labour hamlets, the workers were beaten and forced to shout that 15 bags of paddy per year, or 8 annas (50 paise) per day would be enough and that they would give up their demand for 30 bags of paddy and Rs. 1.50 per day.

Just one incident will show the brutality and the organised murder that was carried on by the Congress Seva Dal. In Bezwada, the Congress *goonda dal* organised by M. Chitti, the Bezwada Congress leader, raided the offices of the City Committee of the Communist Party and trade union and killed Durgadasi Kanakayya and Ilupilla Appalaswamy, two Communist Cell Secretaries, and beat

up a number of others and destroyed the whole office. The police who were on the scene did not intervene. Later, a case was launched against some of the *goondas* but Chitti was not among the accused and all those charged were acquitted. The Bezwada working class quarters were the special targets after that. Raids went on regularly in some place or other; people were arrested, tortured, and kept in remand for 15 days or more; some were detained or charge-sheeted and the rest released.

All the Communist municipal councillors in the whole province (about 30) were detained. The workers in Rajahmundry, Ellore, Guntakal, Bitragunta came out on repeated protest strikes against the arrests of their leaders and faced brutal lathi-charges.

The same vandalism and terror were rampant in the Razole taluka of the East Godavari district. Here, the lands of agricultural labourers were forcibly auctioned and bought up by the rich landowners. The agricultural workers were terrorised and beaten to accept 8 annas as wages. Landlords like Lingamurthy Raju, owning 1,250 acres of deltaic irrigated land and Bolla Bullaiah, owning 5,000 acres were the leaders and instigators of the police raids in this taluka.

In spite of this terrific repression, August 15, 1948 was celebrated in hundreds of villages, denouncing the Congress Government for compromising with British imperialism on the question of full independence, and demanding the stopping of the military and the *Razakar* atrocitity in the Telangana villages, and pledging full support to the Telangana fighters in the struggle for liberation against the Nizam.

And the people, in spite of the terror, began to fight for their demands. Agricultural workers in the Krishna district in about 90 villages, went on strike or prepared themselves for strike and won wage increases of 3 to 5 bags of paddy. In Guntur district, in about 70 villages, and in Nellore in about 20 villages, they went on strikes and won their demands. In the East Godavari district, in the Razole and Ramchandrapuram talukas, agricultural workers struck work and won wage-increases. In the Pithapuram taluka of East Godavari, during the replanting season, agricultural labourers in a few villages won from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per day. The movement for higher wages and holidays spread to the Rayalaseema districts, Cuddapah and Anantapur. In the West Godavari, Nellore, Cuddapah and Anantapur districts, *banzar* lands (waste lands) to the extent of hundreds of acres were occupied by agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The rising people's struggles for their demands, along with their resistance to the police, landlord and Congress Seva Dal terror made the Government even more panicky and it resorted to more and more mad repression.

While this rule of fascist terror continued, with its Public Safety ('Disorders') Act in operation which practically amounted to martial law in wide areas, the district board elections were conducted. The Communist Party set up its candidates wherever it was possible and fought the Congress candidates. The results of the elections showed that the Congress Government was fast losing hold on the people,

and the Communist Party was winning the masses in Andhra, in spite of 18 months of systematic police-*goonda raj*.

The Congress bourgeois-landlord Government panicked and banned the Communist Party in the Madras province, the Provincial Kisan Sabha, the Andhra Provincial Agricultural Labour Association, the Andhra Provincial Youth Federation and all the strong TUs in the province. The Government sent orders to all the heads of high schools and colleges in the province to drive out all Communist-minded students and their sympathisers from the educational institutions.

Anything in the nature of civil liberty was totally absent in the areas where the militant people's movements existed. In a word, these areas were declared disturbed areas with orders to the police to shoot at sight anybody whom they suspected to be Communists. The couriers, pilots, contacts, shelter keepers, et cetera, who accidentally fell into the hands of the police were subjected to sadistic torture like thrusting pins under fingernails, hanging them upside down, and all sorts of devilish brutalities.

Destruction of all properties, houses, furniture, including utensils, and open loot of every valuable went on on a mass scale. In a number of villages in Andhra, there were dozens of families who were driven away from their homes and fields. The properties of underground comrades were confiscated and put to open auction. But nobody was prepared to buy them, nor for that matter, dared to do so because even the Congress bullies knew that it would be playing with fire.

In the Krishna district, and Gudivada and Gannavaram in Divi taluka, they raided villages. In Elamarru and Katur villages, they gathered men and women, beat the menfolk and stripped them naked. They tried to strip the women naked also, but the women resisted. Later they marched the naked men, followed by women, in a procession through the streets. In Elamarru village, they made the naked persons prostrate before Mahatma Gandhi's statue. This was the Congress raj's latest homage to their 'Mahatmaji'. Similarly, nude processions were conducted by the Congress police in some other villages like Pedamuktevi, Pamullanka, etc.

In the village of Elamarru, Comrade Daveedu, an old agricultural labour leader, was beaten because he refused to say 'Congress-ki-jai'. He kept shouting: 'Communist Party ki-jai', till he fell unconscious. He was down due to innumerable lathi blows, he was arrested and later released on bail. Once again, in another raid, he was caught and beaten and left as dead. But he survived, got the red flag brought to him and saluted it.

Everybody who was arrested in the Divi taluka was severely beaten. Dasari Venkateswar Rao got 300 blows and Nagabhushanam 100 lathi blows.

It had become the regular practice of the police to arrest people and keep them in police camps for days together without producing them before magistrates, subjecting them to beatings and tortures, to force them to confess. Mandava Venkateswar Rao, Divi taluka, Krishna district, was beaten to death in the Pedamkutevi police camp by the police and the Congress *goondas*.

Comrade M. Seetharamayya, Secretary of the Divi Taluka Committee of the Communist Party, was repeatedly beaten by the Special CID Inspector in Masulipatam but not a word came out from him. He was threatened that he would be shot dead. His brother Narsiah, a student worker in Bezwada, was arrested in mid-December and was kept for more than a month in a special camp of the DSP, Palaniappan, and along with ten others was tortured. No news of him was given even to his wife or nearest relatives.

Mandava Koteshwar Rao of Amudallanka, who was charge-sheeted in the case of killing Venkatanarayana, was released on bail. But when he was going to the court, Congress *goondas* pounced upon him outside the village and beat him to death.

The police forced open the room of a newly-wed harijan couple, Prakash Rao and Sarojini in Divi taluka, and opening fire wounded them both.

Molesting women became a regular practice of the police and the Congress Seva Dal members. Throwing the women out with their children at the dead of night and burning their houses was another common practice.

In Neppalli, Krishna district, Kodali Chittamma who had given birth to her child only a fortnight before, was beaten and dragged out of her house at night along with her children and the house was set on fire. All the household utensils and the foodgrains stored in it were also burnt down.

In Veeravasaram, Bhimavaram taluka, West Godavari district, the wife of Comrade Uddaraju Ramam, District Secretary, was beaten. Her three-year-old son was also beaten. Then they were threatened that they would be thrown out of the house because Comrade Ramam, when arrested, got out of their clutches with the help of the people.

Much worse things happened, too. In the village of Viswanathapalli, in the Divi taluka of the Krishna district, Congress Seva Dal goondas raped half a dozen women.

The village munsiff of Yeditha at Ramachandrapur taluk, East Godavari, got a woman raped by six of his *goondas* in his very presence and then thrust a bamboo into her genitals. And yet when this fascist was killed by the people, the Congress Government raised a hue and cry, foisted a case, sentencing four to be hanged and eleven to transportation to life.

The police opened fire on an agricultural labour procession in Jupoodi, Bapatla taluka, Guntur district, killing one and wounding several. They announced to the press that they had to do so because villagers obstructed them from arresting Comrade Chenna Reddy, the village Communist leader.

In Pedapasapula village of Jammalamadugu taluka in the Cuddapah district, again, the police opened fire on the people killing Kondareddi. Here, too, the people surrounded the police and set free Comrade Eswar Reddy, the district Communist leader, from the hands of the police.

In the village of U.Rajupalem in the Cuddapah district, the police opened

fire on the agricultural workers because they had been on strike. Three people were killed.

The Government did not stop with these atrocities. In Cuddalore jail, where Andhra detenus were detained it opened, fire on the detenus, killing four comrades, including Comrade Anumarlapudi Seetharamarao, the Krishna district kisan leader. He was shot at point-blank range by the jail constables after he fell flat, with the gun held directly above him. The reason for this repeated firing on the Cuddalore detenus was that they demanded, among other things, no segregation from the rest of the detenus; interviews with their wives and close relatives; allowance for their families; all kisan and worker prisoners to be treated as politicals and given special class; improved facilities and betterment of conditions of the ordinary convicts and transfer to their own district jails. They demanded that they be tried or released. Apart from the four killed, nearly a hundred received gun-shot injuries or severe injuries from lathi blows. In Salem jail, they opened fire, killed 22 Communist prisoners, all of them belonging to Kerala, and injured more than a hundred belonging to all regions of the Madras State.

To terrorise the people, the Madras Government had adopted the same practice that the Indian Government's armed forces were following in Telangana, viz., shooting dead the captured leaders of the people.

The Madras Government and the Government of India were flabbergasted with the continued resistance of the Communists and of the people's movement, both in the coastal districts as well as in the Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal districts in Telangana. Frequent conferences of the police chiefs of Madras, Hyderabad and the Government of India were held, plans were drawn up, which they announced would liquidate the Communists to a man in no time.

Thus, the years 1949 and 1950 saw a new pitch of intensified terror of mass raids, beatings, loots, rapes and shootings of important people's leaders and Communist leaders after their arrest, and these murders were announced to the press as 'shot dead in encounter with the police'.

People Fight back

The Party during the whole of 1948 was calling upon the Party ranks and the people to bravely face the police attacks, not to leave the villages but assert their right to demonstrate and the right to hoist red flags, and fight back the police brutalities with whatever weapon they could lay their hands on. But the police came in hundreds and this call of frontal resistance reduced itself to militant *satyagraha* with backs and bones of our comrades broken and a number of important cadres arrested.

The people and the party ranks were fed up with this form of resistance. In the Jupudi village in the Guntur district, they organised themselves into squads, retreated into neighbouring villages when the police came in large numbers, but the moment they went away, came back and attacked the landlords and their agents. This ding-dong battle continued for more than a year.

In Davajigudem, Krishna district, the local cadre adopted similar tactics.

It was in November 1948, in the Pedamuktavi village in Divi taluka, Krishna district, which was the worst target of Congress police brutalities, that the comrades mobilised themselves and entered the village, dragged the landlords out of their beds and they did the same with their agents who were terrorising the whole neighbourhood, and gave them a good thrashing.

The people's reaction was 'how long could the Communists keep mum in the face of the torture they were being subjected to: they have decided to fight back'. This was the thought in everybody's mind.

A joint conference of the Madras and Hyderabad police officials assisted by Central Intelligence officials took place. Open announcements were made that within a month or two, no Communist would be allowed to exist in the coastal districts and the same methods as in Telangana would be adopted. That meant that they could shoot any Communist they find. The Congress Seva Dal and the landlords in villages were being armed and there was open talk in Congress offices that the Communists would be taught a lesson.

It was under these conditions that in July 1949, the Party gave the call of 'a tooth for a tooth' and 'an eye for an eye', to fight back the landlord-police terror that had been going on for so long.

The Andhra State Committee of the Party was opposed during the whole of 1948 to resort to arms in the Andhra area, as the people there had not yet developed to the stage of waging a struggle for land and defending it by arms as in Telangana. It also argued that the political-economic situation in the Andhra area under Congress regime was entirely 'different' from that prevailing in Telangana under the Nizam. But it yielded to this demand from the lower ranks and from the Telangana comrades, to take up arms, and develop the guerrilla movement to help the Telangana movement as well. But it was soon found that there was no mass participation and fighting as in Telangana, only squad actions were there, which were easily suppressed due to the brutal violence by the Congress regime. The Party later came to the conclusion that these tactics were wrong and caused great loss and damage to the Party; though by its strong fight against terror and immense sacrifices, it gained the respect of the toiling people and middle classes.

The Party at the time was still thinking that it was possible for the exposed leadership and ranks to function from neighbouring areas by taking up some profession as cover and eking out a living. It was a costly mistake to have entertained such ideas when the people there were not participating, and were not ready to fight back the armed forces of the Government actively and protect the cadres. We should have withdrawn most of the cadres and squads to our Telangana bases in the forests and the mountainous territory or a strong safe area, and continued the work in the old areas with entirely unexposed cadres. The Party learned this bitter lesson only after a few months of severe losses of cadre and the Party leaders, during March-June 1950.

The Government was ready with its plans to give a heavy blow to the Party and the mass movement in the coastal districts. It was ready with increased police camps and with orders to shoot and kill any Communist leader or guerrilla squad member who fell into their hands. During the year 1950, the coastal districts of Andhra were the scene of heroic struggles of the people, with people's resistance actions against the landlords and their agents on the one hand, and the mass butchery of the Congress Government to drown in blood the people's fight, on the other.

People's Actions in Andhra

In the Krishna district, in Divi taluka, in the village Velivolu, the *goonda* leader Basavayya destroyed property worth Rs. 50,000, collected a fine of Rs. 25,000 and stole hens and ducks. He enforced the wage rate of 8 annas (50 paise) when the normal rate was Rs. 1.50. His *goonda* camp was raided by the people and he was beaten and crippled for ever and two of his lieutenants were killed.

In the Katur village of Gannavaram taluka, Ramalingayya was a Home Guard, a *goonda*, a landlord agent and an informer. His name was associated with all the loot, arson, attempts at raping, all other atrocities committed on the people during 1948-1949. Tens of villages were raided under his leadership. A special police camp was opened in Katur village. Men and women who passed that way were caught and made to do forced labour. This scoundrel used to jump over the compound walls into the home-yards when women would be taking their baths. He was presented with a revolver by the Government. But he was killed right in the village, within the vicinity of the armed police camp. In buses, coffee houses, trains, the talk went round but not a word of sympathy for him was heard. People who saw the corpse at the Vuyyur bus stand on the way to Masula Hospital for post-mortem were heard saying, 'he did such atrocious things and has got the punishment for it'.

In Gannavaram taluka, on the main Bezwada-Masula road, in the village Chinna Vogirala, two hated landlords were killed right in front of the police camp, and their guns were seized. The police in Kankipadu station — just 10 miles away — locked themselves up and did not dare move out, in spite of frantic knocking at the door by the local landlords to come out and give them protection. Their reply was that they had to guard their station and said—'We too have our families and children and our lives are dear to us'.

In the Tiruvur taluka, Krishna district, in December 1949, and again, in March 1950, people raided 20 villages and confiscated gold and guns from the landlords and killed a few of them, with the help of the Telangana guerrillas.

In the East Godavari district, in Razole taluka, Lingamurthy Raju, a big landlord, who usurped 1200 acres of temple land, fertile deltaic soil, along with a few other big landlords, organised some guards and instituted a reign of terror. These *goonda* landlords tried to seize the crops on lanka lands. The Government forcibly took over these lands that were being cultivated by agricultural labourers

for 20 to 30 years and auctioned them to these landlords. Women and men led by the Party fought many a glorious struggles and saved their crops on the fields. Again and again, agricultural labourers went on strikes for higher wages. Women were in the forefront. They too got training in self-defence. When the husbands of some wanted to prevent them, the reply these brave women gave was: 'You cannot save our honour or life, yet you try to obstruct us from taking training to defend ourselves'. Women acted as couriers, kept watch on police movements and conveyed information to the Party leaders and protected them from the police.

After undergoing regular torture for months, agricultural labourers and poor peasants began to retaliate. Twenty of Lingamurthy's *goondas* were beaten to pulp. Some of them were maimed for life. One *goonda* who used to participate in raids all day, used to come at night and boast before his wife, 'I have kicked men all day and my legs are aching. Come and *foment* my legs with hot water'. The people broke his legs for good.

In Edida, in Ramachandrapur taluka, East Godavari district, the village munsiff got the police to repeatedly raid the agricultural labourer and poor peasant hamlets in all the neighbouring villages. Their huts were burnt. Some *harijan* women were raped on his orders in his very presence by 10 of his *goondas*. The people killed him, avenging the atrocities he had committed.

In West Godavari district, one Subbarayadu of Vemavaram village, Narsapur taluka, who brought the police to raid the quarters of agricultural labourers 27 times within a period of one year, was killed by the people.

In Korukollu village, Bhimavaram taluka, West Godavari district, the district Party Secretary was rescued by the villagers from police hands. The police camped there and destroyed houses and forced many peasants to leave their villages. The village munsiff of Kanchumarru used to aid the police in these atrocities. The people burnt down his house and property and warned him and his family not to indulge in any more atrocities on the people, otherwise, next time, the consequences would be much more severe.

In Guntur district, in Veluru village of Narasaraopeta taluka, the agricultural labourers with the help of the poor and middle peasants, began to fight for higher wages. They were subjected to innumerable raids. Their houses were destroyed. The agricultural labourers retaliated and destroyed the tobacco crops of the hated landlords. The landlords immediately bowed down, pleaded for terms. The landlords were forced to make up for all the losses suffered by the villagers. All the cases against the villagers were to be withdrawn. The police camp was to be removed from the village. The landlords complied with all these terms. But they were biding their time. The moment they harvested their crop and sold it, they got back the police and mass shooting started in the Guntur district. In the two months of April and May, nearly 70 persons were arrested and shot dead by the Congress armed police, 15 of them in the neighbourhood of Veluru village, including the leader of the area, Comrade Danda Narayanaswamy.

The Telangana guerrilla squads helped the people to raid the Atchampet police

station. They shot dead two constables, and took possession of 70 guns. This was the first major action against a police station by guerrillas in the coastal districts. This action was followed by other actions in about 15 villages where the hated landlords were killed by the guerrillas. Most of these actions took place in the border talukas of Guntur-Palnad-Sattenapalli; the Telangana guerrillas made the forests nearby their base of operations.

The Telangana guerrilla squads aided their colleagues from Andhra area to operate throughout the forest region of Nallamala covering the Kurnool and Guntur districts on the banks of the Krishna River.

In the whole of Andhra, in about 100 villages, people attacked landlords or their agents, killed some of them, destroyed property of some others and seized guns from them.

It had been the common practice in every raid to burn all the debt and mortgage bonds of the hated landlords. This fact was announced to the villagers through leaflets and they were asked not to re-write the bonds or pay their debts. The landlords concerned were threatened of dire consequences if they tried to collect the debts with the help of the police.

In many villages, the agricultural labourers and the poor raided the landlords' granaries and distributed the grain. In a number of other villages, the paddy crop was cut and taken away.

The people hated the landlords and the police agents. They helped to destroy the enemy properties. The villagers, especially agricultural labourers and poor peasants, gave shelter to the party leaders and cadres at great risk to their life and property. They guarded and sheltered them as their own sons. In Antarvedipalem, East Godavari district, when a group of 20 villages was surrounded by a 3,000 strong armed police and Congress Home Guards, not a single party comrade was caught. The people saved them all, though for one full week, the police went on arresting and beating every male in that whole area. It was the agricultural labour women that came forward to act as couriers. In spite of this object terror, hundreds of party members and tens of organisers continued to live in the villages. This was possible only because of the tremendous cooperation of the people and especially the agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

All the poorer classes considered the Communist Party to be their party. They believed that only under a people's Government headed by the Communist Party would their sufferings come to an end. In the talukas bordering Telangana, they were eagerly awaiting the Communist guerrillas to come and distribute the land. Even in far-off Cuddapah, where in a few villages the agricultural labourers and poor peasants occupied waste lands under the Communist Party leadership, the talk went round that the Nalgonda Communists had come and were distributing the land. In Palnad taluka, Guntur district, when squads were going through new areas where no movement had ever existed, poor peasants approached the squads and asked them to drive away the landlords and *agraharamdars* and rid them

of this feudal pest. The moment the guerrillas began to raid the hated landlords' houses and the police station and seize arms, the enemy became terror-stricken. The hated landlords, and the moneylenders began to leave the villages and flee to the towns. This was a very common feature in many villages of Krishna, Guntur and the two Godavari districts. The remaining *goondas* in the village slept together at a place, guns by their side and with sentries posted all night, changing their places frequently.

With the raid on the police station of Atchampeta, the confusion and terror of the enemy increased by leaps and bounds. 'The Communists captured 70 guns, how can we live now?' This was what Sri N. G. Ranga exclaimed. This same Congress leader who had demanded that the Communists must be hunted down and wiped out by declaring Martial Law, did not dare move out without a police lorry to protect him on his tours in the Guntur district. Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress leader of fascist terror in India, had to admit in Parliament in Delhi 'that the people of Andhra are not co-operating with them in suppressing the Communists'.

Mass Butchery by the Government

Comrade Chintapalli Paparao, the Krishna district Secretariat member of the Party, was arrested in Surampalli village in Gannavaram taluka in October 1949, on Deepavali day by Palaniappan, the Special DSP in Krishna. This scoundrel demanded from Paparao his resignation from the Party. Paparao spat on him and shouted, 'Communist Party Zindabad'. Palaniappan shot off his tied arms and once again demanded his resignation. Paparao shouted back, 'You cur, had I got information of your raid just half an hour before, I would have seen your blood'. He was shot in the thigh and he fell down, but he refused for the third time to give up his Party. He died with the victory cry, 'Communist Party Zindabad' on his lips when the third shot pierced his heart. Thousands of people gathered at Gannavaram hospital in spite of the police terror to have a last glimpse of their beloved leader. Nobody believed the Congress communique that the police officer shot him dead as he was about to stab the officer.

Comrade Mrityanjayudu, the West Godavari district Secretariat member, was arrested in a house in Rajahmundry, taken to the outskirts of the town near the present paper mills, and shot dead. The news was given out that he died in a clash and the rest of his colleagues managed to escape (May 16, 1950).

Devarakonda Subba Rao, the leader of Pendyala-Kanur peasant struggle and District Committee member of Godavari, was arrested from Nidadavolu and was immediately shot dead on the canal bund. Comrades Narra Anjaneyulu, Padala Subbarao, and Edpuganti Purnachandrarao, West Godavari district Secretariat members, were arrested in various dens (secret houses where underground comrades lived) and were shot dead in cold blood. Comrades Kalidindi Suryanarayana Raju (Tanuku taluka leader), R. Ayyaparaju A. Ramraju (Narsapur leaders), were arrested and shot dead (May 28, 1950).

Nadella Venkata Krishnayya, a Divi Area Committee member, was arrested in Ellur den and shot dead on the spot. Yelamanchili Venkateswar Rao, another area committee member, was arrested from a Madras City den, brought to Divi taluka and shot dead along with Dasari Nagabhushanam of Divi taluka. This was in July or August 1950.

Comrades Chalasani Jagannatharao, Secretary of the Divi Area Committee, one of the founder-members of the Communist Party in the Krishna district, was arrested in Rayaguda in Orissa province along with Bh. Ramarao and Tottenpoodi Narayana Rao, and Comrade Seetaramayya on November 16, 1950. They were taken to Divi taluka and were shot dead. The story given out by the Government was that they were shot dead in an encounter.

Comrade Challapalli Narayana Rao, the beloved Communist leader of agricultural labourers of The divi taluka and the Krishna district, along with Comrade Gogineni Tatayya, another Divi leader, was arrested at V. Kothapalli and both were shot dead.

Comrade Satyaprasad, a Gannavaram Area Committee member, was arrested at Nandyal in Kurnool district and was taken back to his village and shot dead, along with three other Communist cadre arrested at different places. Katragadda Chinna Venkatarayudu (the hero of many a people's action, especially the lightning attack on Chinnavogirala) and his companion, Comrade Kadiyala Narayana Rao, both of whom had reorganised the Gannavaram area Party, were traced to a Bezwada den and were arrested and shot dead, in the first week of December 1950.

Comrades Edpugunti Subba Rao, Pathuri Narasimha Rao, Koneru Mallikarjuna Rao were arrested at Bhimavaram and were shot dead. They were betrayed by the renegade and traitor, Potluru Sundaram.

Comrades Chelasani Rajagopal Rao of Nuzvid taluka, Atluri Purnachandra Rao and Marireddi Satyanarayana, Gudivada area leaders of the Krishna district, were arrested and shot dead.

Most of the Munagala party leaders, Comrades Vangali Pappayya, Gattu Gopalakrishnayya and others were shot dead.

Comrade Kandikatla Nagabhushanam, an East Godavari district Secretariat member, who was arrested in the then French territory of Yanam in the last week of September 1950, was extradited and, was shot dead the next day. The story given out was that he tried to escape while at morning ablutions.

Comrades P. Anantam and Chintam Satyanarayana Dass, the other two members of the East Godavari district Secretariat, were also arrested in a village near Samalkot and were shot dead there itself, tied to a tree.

Chalasani Sreenivasa Rao, a member of the Andhra Student Fraction Committee, was arrested in a Masula den and later shot dead. Kanchan Rao, a student in Bezwada, was arrested as he was coming out of the examination hall and was shot dead.

Ravi Bheema Rao, a student from Divi taluka, studying in Guntur College,

was arrested, then taken to Divi taluka and shot dead. Comrade Bellam Shobhanadhri, a Bezwada labour leader, was arrested and was shot dead. These and many other names were not even announced in the press by the Government.

Comrades Kasturi Kutumba Rao, Secretary, Andhra Handloom Weavers' Association, Chivukula Sesha Sastry, a Bapatla town Party leader, M. Lakshminarayana, District Teachers' Federation Secretary, Danda Narayanaswamy, a Narsaraopet taluka Party leader, Dasari Subbayya, Rapalle taluka leader, Mallikarjuna Sarma, Guntur district agricultural labour leader, Madala Kotayya and Narasayya of Ongole taluka were all arrested and were shot dead in cold blood.

One of the death-defying stories comes from the town of Bapatla. Here, there was an underground den of the Tenali Area Committee. Kantamaneni Venkataratnam, the Area Committee member, was staying there with Comrade Moturi Venkatratnam's family, his wife and her two-year-old baby. The police surrounded the house. Comrade Venkataratnam refused to surrender. He wanted to fight the marauding police and teach them a lesson. He asked the Moturi family to go by the back door while he covered the police with fire. They refused to leave their leader alone. A gun battle developed. The police inspector fell down (he died later later). The police could not overcome the resistance, so they set the house to fire with petrol. Comrade Kantamaneni Venkataratnam and his den-keeper, Moturi Venkataratnam and his two year-old baby in the hands of the mother, died of gun shots.

Jankiamma, of Ramapuram village in Palnad taluka, because she had been giving shelter to the Telangana guerrillas, was molested, tortured and shot dead. Besides her, all other cadre of the area were shot dead. The excuse was that they aided the Telangana guerrillas who had raided the Atchampeta police station and killed notorious police agents like the village *karanam* of Ramapuram.

The Government adopted a policy of hoodwinking the underground comrades. It announced that Potluru Sundaram and Telekepalli Krishnamurthy were shot dead in an encounter, when in reality, after their arrests, they became Government agents and led the police to arrest a large number of underground comrades. Potluru Sundaram betrayed Comrade Edpugunti Subba Rao and his colleagues in Bhimavaram, Tummulapalli Gopayya and his companions in Dhawleswaram. The police arrested and shot them dead. This Sundaram got lands from the police at various places and became a Congress leader, carrying on his nefarious activities. Telekepalli Krishnamurthy was sent with police escort to entice the Telangana guerrillas and Guntur comrades who were with them in Nallamala Krishna forests, but the guerrillas shot him dead.

In a separate appendix, we are giving a list of the comrades shot dead during the years of the Congress regime in the districts of Andhra area, the Martyrs' Roll coming to about 300.

Given below are some press statements about the naked police zoolum in Andhra, that appeared at that time.

Some Press Statements on Repression in Andhra

Sri Vemula Kurmayya, former Congress Minister for *Harijan* Uplift, member, Madras Legislative Assembly, issued a statement on the shameless police atrocities in the village of Yelamarru, on extract from which is given hereunder:

'Before day-break on 14th July, 1949, 200 MSP raided the village of Yelamarru. They surrounded the village and did not allow anybody to leave. After daybreak, they gathered the villagers in three batches in the local high school compound. They stripped them naked and each was given ten stripes. Then, they forcibly paraded them naked throughout the village. When some tried to hide themselves with their hands, they were beaten again. Some of them were made to lie prostrate before the Gandhi statue and were given more blows. Even after this, the clothes were not returned but they were asked to go home and appear before their womenfolk naked and to come back attired in new clothes. Both untouchables and touchables were among the people who were subjected to this atrocious humiliation and beating.'

'All the women in the *harijan* colony were made to stand in the maidan and were beaten. The menfolk in their nakedness were asked to go and bring his wife. One was ordered to strip naked his wife who was 16 years old. He refused. They threatened the woman and asked her to strip herself naked. She refused and replied, 'You may kill me but I will never debase myself'. Thereupon a policeman was about to strip her naked, when the village munsiff prevented him, warning that it would lead to trouble. After this, the women were beaten again, and were allowed to go home.'

In all the villages of the district, the people ask about these village atrocities, which they say, are worse than the Punjab atrocities perpetrated by the British imperialists in 1919.

'I want the Premier and the Telugu Ministers to tour these villages in the district which are subjected to police raids and vouchsafe peace and protection for the people. Otherwise, the people may revolt in sheer exasperation.' (*Andhra Prabha*, July 23, 1946).

Sri I. Lingayya, President of the Gudivada Taluka Congress Committee, and Sri B. Visweswar Rao, member of the Working Committee of the APCC, jointly issued the following statement to the press:

'The police surrounded the village on the 14th morning. Then they gathered all the villagers including a few Communists at a place. They were stripped naked, lathi-charged, paraded naked in the streets, and were made to prostrate before Gandhiji's statue...We feel that no democratic Government can tolerate these shameless and uncivilised atrocities...They have maligned the pious and high ideals of Gandhiji by making naked people prostrate before the Gandhi statue. It is absolutely necessary that a just enquiry is made about these atrocious deeds...'

Sri Yenigalla Venkatramayya, President of the Yelamarru Village Congress Committee, in a statement said:

'There was a raid on our village on the 14th of this month. This kind of raids is one of the important items in the constructive programme of the Government. The Communists may be arrested; but even some village elders and Congressmen were stripped of their clothes and beaten. This is a permanent blot on the history of the Congress...By doing so, people lose their sympathies and confidence in the Congress and develop hatred towards it. This makes the existence of Congress committees in villages impossible....' (*Andhra Prabha*, July 26, 1949).

Sri A. Chakradhar, Secretary of the Andhra Socialist Party, in a letter *to* the Editor of the Andhra Prabha dated July 22, 1949, said:

'300 police raided the village of Katur, Gannavaram taluka, Krishna district on the 16th of this month. All men in the village—irrespective of their creed—were cruelly lathi-charged. Women were abused.

'About 400 men were stripped of their clothes and paraded on the streets in nakedness. Some women were also among them. But they were not made naked.'

'Are these the measures the police has to adopt under the Congress rule? It is natural that a critical situation arises in the country if Congress leaders and officials keep quiet. And Congressmen can be held responsible for such a critical situation.'

'I request that the Madras Government orders a non-official enquiry into the incident and takes sufficient precautions that such incidents do not occur in future'. (*Andhra Prabha*, July 24, 1949).

Andhra Prabha, a leading Telugu daily of Andhra, in its editorial dated July 26, 1949, wrote:

'Uncivilised, atrocious, unspeakable—these may be very strong words; but even these words are not sufficient to describe the barbarous raids by the police in the Krishna district.'

'The same gruesome and sordid story from every village-gather all people, indiscriminately beat them, strip some of them of their clothes, parade those people in the streets in nakedness.'

'... By doing such things, it does not result in suppressing the Communists; but only creates hatred against the Congress. Loyalty towards the Congress does not increase but only makes the people think that the British raj is better.'

'In their efforts to suppress the Communists in the Krishna district, civil liberties are not only infringed but a situation is created when people have to feel shame for being born as people of India.'

'... Besides stopping such atrocities, the officials responsible should be punished.'

'We came to know that Sri Madhava Menon (Minister of Law) has brushed off these incidents as Communist propaganda. It is not correct. Those who have written letters to our office are all Congressmen and they wrote only after personally visiting the villages and after enquiry.'

The repression was so brutal, atrocious and wanton that the very Congress

leaders who themselves brought and organised police raids on villages, were forced to issue statements in the press condemning it, seeing the anger of the people.

Marupilla Chitti, the Krishna district Congress leader (who got two Communists killed in Bezwada) said:

'*Seva Dals* (Congress volunteer squads) are being fed with the money looted during the raids in the villages. Drunkards, habitual convicts, have become village Congress leaders...Loot, burning of houses, murders are being committed...' (*Andhra Patrika,* April, 21).

N. Venkatramana, a Congressman and President of the Repalle Panchayat Board (Guntur district), said:

'... 60 MSP men are camping in Repalle Board School. Since they came, people are terrified to go that way ... Recently, a policeman went and asked a trader the cost of a soap. He was told it costs 5 1/2 annas. The policeman angrily remarked, 'The same price for us?' and went away. They came in the evening, beat him black and blue, and took him away to their camp ... One day, when a shepherd came to the high school ground to graze his sheep, police forcibly caught two sheep and ate them. A lambadi woman (a tribal woman) came into the village to buy some salt. The police caught hold of her, took her to the camp and many of them raped her cruelly. When she fell unconscious, she was left near the railway station of Repalle...In the same way, another woman who was going to her village, after seeing a picture, was caught hold of and raped... .' (*Andhra Prabha*, May 22, 1950).

Gogineni Laxminarayana, a rabid anti-Communist Congress leader and brother of N. G. Ranga, APCC President, said:

'In the night of July 16, 1950, the sub-inspector of police of Phirangipuram, with some constables, raided Nudurupadu village... In every house, cots, pickle jars, cement water tubs, brass utensils, et cetera, were smashed and littered all over. Six or seven castor oil tins of some traders were opened and the oil emptied on to the ground.'

'K. Laxminarayana, who was a victim of police atrocities, said to me:

'At 4 p.m. the police came. They asked: You son of a bitch, are you a Communist leader? I was beaten heavily, I fell unconscious. They spoilt all the foodstuffs and other things in my house, looted all the money, and went away. The doors and cots were broken...The police went to T. Obulreddi's house. He and his wife, seeing the police atrocities, went to another house for shelter. Police entered his house, damaged the house, smashed jars, brass utensils, cots, almirahs, etc.'

U. Pitchireddi was beaten with the butt-end of guns and lathis. His property was destroyed. He was arrested, and was being taken to Subbareddy's house. (This Subbareddy is the biggest landlord and was the initiator of these raids). Meanwhile, Subbareddy came that way. The police officer asked Subbareddy

whether he was satisfied. He replied, 'No, not yet. Some more people should be made to sit in a row and beaten....'

The Sattenapalli Congress Committee, Narsaraopet Municipality, the Tanuku Congress Committee and a host of others issued statements condemning this repression.

Mr. C. V. Rajagopalachari, Secretary of the Civil Liberties Union, Madras, in a special report to its general body, said:

'Seven peasants were forcibly taken by the armed special police from the villages of Kodur, Velvadam and Ganapavaram and they were alleged to have been shot dead in Butchireddipalem near Mylavaram'.

'Challapalli Narayanarao and Tatiah, who were hiding in the vicinity of Kothapalem, were captured by the men belonging to the party of landed aristocrats and handed over to the police party headed by the circle inspector, Avanigadda. They were shot dead. This incident was also reported as an encounter between the police and the Communists. But later on, it was reported that a reward was distributed to the men, who captured them both'.

'Venkateshwar Rao of Movva village was captured by the men belonging to the party of the landed aristocrats and beaten to death at the Pedamuktevi police station. His maternal uncle was silenced by promises and threats. Venkateshwar Rao's dead body was sent to Masulipatam for post-mortem examination. The District Medical Officer had issued a post-mortem certificate saying that it was a clear case of murder. No action was taken by the police to book the culprits because the victim was a Communist.

'Four dead bodies were brought by the police to this village, and they reported to the magistrate that there was an 'encounter'. The place from where the so-called Communists opened fire was a marshy land. No trace of watery mud was found in the dead bodies nor even on their legs....'

'Jasti Raghavayya and Mukkamala Rao who are standing trial before the Special Second Class magistrate, Vijayawada, were on bail. They were regularly attending every hearing. One night, they were taken away by the special police from their respective houses to an unknown destination and were shot dead. The sureties reported to the magistrate that the accused were taken by the police. The sub-magistrate passed orders forfeiting the surety bonds for Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 800 respectively.

'Mr. Crombi, the former Deputy District Magistrate of Kistna, had to resign out of sheer disgust. It would appear that he had several reports questioning the correctness of the alleged encounters reported to have taken place between the Communists and the special police force'. (*Crossroads*, September 8, 1950).

Sri Yellamanchili Nagabhushanam, former Public Prosecutor, in his presidential speech to the Conference of the Madras Civil Liberties' Union, on June 25, 1950, said:

'The situation has deteriorated to an unimaginable extent. Our freedom and

our independence are at the mercy of local leaders and of those who have political power in their hands... .'

'Section 5 of the Madras Suppression of Disorder Act (1948) is proving a terror to one and all. A police officer can open fire on any number of persons. Nobody can raise his voice. The police officer was given protection vide another section ... Powers of discretion to shoot were vested in the police officers ... This act places the lives of the common people in the hands of police officers ... Such powers have made some police officers follow the footsteps of Dyer. The incidents of the days of General Dyer are still in the memories of the people. Those who came out as leaders in those days are today in power and they have given the power to shoot and kill anybody to the police officers. This is atrocious ... Our daily press is publishing news to the effect that a clash took place between the Communists and the police, that the police have shot dead some Communist subversive elements. As you go on reading such news items, you will come to know the truth behind them ... In some cases, rumours are published in the press that the Communist Party sympathisers and suspects are taken to unknown and undetectable places and shot dead.'

'I am constrained to believe that those in power are creating such a serious situation, in order to entrench themselves in power for long.'

Such was the ghastly murder rule of the Congress. And yet, Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Indian Union, had then made a lying attack on the Communist Party and attributed murders, arson, loot to it. The capable Sardar could do it and put it to the kept press, for malpropaganda, only after he had ordered the closure of the democratic press and gagged voices of all the people only after banning the Communist Party and all mass organisations, and only after he had clamped down his rule of fascist terror and medieval barbarous regime.

PART II

1

Entry of Indian Army and Immediately After

1. On the Eve of the Indian Army Intervention

By the middle of 1948, all the developments pointed to the possibility of the Indian Government intervening in Hyderabad to force the Nizam to accede to the Indian Union and of suppressing the spreading Telangana peasant movement. The question arose as to what we should do with regard to this problem.

We were sure that after the Indian army intervention, the Hyderabad State would be forced to accede to India, and the *Razakar* terror would end, but at the same time, a terrific attack on our Party and *Sangham* and on the Telangana movement would be made, to liquidate it. We had a foretaste of it in the way the Congress Government had been attacking and suppressing our Party in the Andhra area. So, should we continue the armed struggle against Nehru's armies and its attack on the Telangana peasants to snatch away all the gains? Or should we withdraw the armed struggle and try to adopt normal legal forms of agitation and struggles, to win partial demands and retain partially the achievements of the Telangana peasants, such as no evictions, no forced labour or exactions; *patta* rights for waste lands that were being cultivated, and confine ourselves to agitation and mass mobilisation for agrarian legislation, for ceilings, rent-reduction, and for civil liberties, elected local bodies, elected ministry for the state, etc?

But if we withdrew the struggle unconditionally, and immediately after the intervention, would the Indian Government declare amnesty and not persecute thousands of guerrilla squads and cadre and members of the Party and *Sangham*, who had carried on confiscation of the land and properties of the big landlords, fighting their agents, the Nizam's police and the *Razakars*? Would it leave in the possession of the peasants the lands they had seized and cultivated? We were sure that it would not and if that was so, would not the peasants resist such attempts at seizure, and if we did not stand by them and defend them even with arms as we did in the past, would they not consider us as betraying them?

But if we decided in favour of carrying on the armed struggle, our squads would have been no match to and would not have been able stand at all in the field before the well-trained, disciplined Indian army with its high morale. Further, the rich peasants, small capitalists and liberal landlords and quite a section of others who were with our struggle against the Nizam would have definitely

gone over to the side of the Indian Government at that stage, as these sections had great hopes that the Government of the Independent India under Nehru would fulfil their aspirations for economic betterment. With no working class actions in the state, no possibility of a general strike or armed uprising, would it not have been disastrous to continue the armed struggle?

If the armed struggle was to be continued, how could it be for anything less than liberation? (At that time, the concept of partial partisan struggle for partial economic demands, as distinct from and not to be confused with the armed struggle for liberation, was not there at all in our understanding. Armed struggle meant liberation struggle or revolutionary armed uprising).

Could the Telangana struggle, then, be the beginning of the liberation struggle? Was it the Yenan of India? Is our path of revolution to proceed along the Chinese path or the Russian path? What are the classes that will be on our side. What classes on the other side? That is, what is the class character of the state that was ushered in in 1947? What are to be the stages and strategy of the revolution?

These were the issues posed and debated strongly to which a practical, urgent solution and answer had to be given.

The arguments for and against the understanding that prevailed then and the decisions taken, and later the corrections made with the advice of the leadership of the international Communist movement will be dealt with in greater detail in the chapter 'Withdrawal of the Armed Struggle'.

To resume this narration of Telangana struggle. Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy, Sri Ella Reddy and a large number of area leaders were for withdrawal of the armed struggle and the adoption of legal or other forms of struggle within the scope available. Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy developed his theory later that it was wrong to have seized the surplus lands of landlords and to have resorted to land distribution, which argument we have examined earlier.

The Hyderabad City Committee, headed by Sri Raj Bahadur Gour and Mahendra and others had issued a press statement that the Indian Government, being a bourgeois-landlord Government, was allied with British imperialism, and that we should therefore oppose the Indian army's entry into Hyderabad and raise the slogan of Azad Hyderabad. Of course, they added, that our struggle against the Nizam Nawab, to remove him from the throne, and to establish a people's democratic state in Hyderabad would continue, but we must fight against the Indian Government's efforts to integrate the Hyderabad State. The Andhra State Committee, in which leaders of the Telangana Party, Ravi Narayan Reddy, Baddam Ella Reddy, and Devulupalli Venkateswar Rao, were also members, unanimously denounced this slogan publicly, the very next day. According to them, it was nothing but playing into the hands of the Nizam and *Razakars*, it was totally against the party policy of dissolution of the Hyderabad state and its merger with the respective linguistic areas in the Indian Union, formation of Vishalandhra, Samyukta Maharashtra and Samyukta Karnataka, and of establishing therein

people's *raj* in a people's democratic republic of India. The Party had to pull up the City Committee very sharply for this gross betrayal of the Party's policy and for harming the movement.

The Indian Government, its radio, and its press took advantage of this statement to carry on a persistent slander campaign that the Communists had joined the *Razakars*, and thus malign and isolate us from the democratic movement in the whole of India. They never even mentioned or printed our denunciation of the stupid and extremely harmful statement of Hyderabad City Committee.

But it is to be noted here that this very same City Committee, these very same persons were opposed to the continuation of the armed struggle, a few months later. And they were the first, in the beginning of 1951, to openly come out denouncing the Telangana movement as having degenerated into individual terrorism, murder and loot and demanded that it should be unconditionally withdrawn, and that the leadership which had all along been heading the Telangana struggle, from the state to the zonal and the village level, be removed from responsible posts. That is the quality of their revolutionary tactics and guts.

Let me add here that though Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and Ella Reddy were for withdrawal of the armed struggle, once the Party decided to carry it on, they tried to obey it and put it into practice. Sri Ella Reddy was arrested within a few months of the police action. Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy was underground till 1950 October and then later left his den (centre) without informing the State leadership and reached the Party headquarters in Bombay and started a campaign against the continuation of the Telangana armed struggle though the Central Committee of the Party on December 13, 1950, had adopted the following resolution on the Telangana struggle:

'The Telangana people have been carrying on a revolutionary struggle, arms in hand, against the oppressors, who have been exploiting them for generations, for their land and freedom, under the leadership of the Communist Party. The C.C. deplores all those statements by some persons demanding the withdrawal of the struggle. The C. C. warns all Party members that when the enemy is trying to drown the Telangana struggle, which heralds the beginning of the People's Democratic Revolution, to make statements demanding its withdrawal will only go to help to disrupt this revolutionary struggle.'

'The C.C. appeals to the Party members and to all people that they must do everything in their power to help and strengthen and sustain the Telangana struggle. The Great Telangana stands as the beacon call to all of us, blazes the trail for us, to build the powerful unity of the people under the leadership of the Communist Party and to advance forward. It will continue, to be so in future as well.' (Re-translated from Telugu)

Let it be also noted that both Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and Ella Reddy, when their brothers were killed, in the course of the partisan struggle, justified and defended the action of the guerrillas publicly.

Decision to Continue the Armed Struggle

The Andhra Provincial Committee of the Party decided to continue the armed struggle even against Nehru's armies. Apart from other aspects, it had felt the immediate practical necessity of defending the gains of the Telangana peasantry against the attempts of deshmukhs and landlords who would be returning with the support of the Indian army to seize the lands from the peasantry. Not to continue the armed struggle would have been a betrayal of the fighting peasantry and damaging the cause of the Telangana people's movement irreparably.

So, on the eve of the 'police action', the Party instructed all the areas and guerrilla squads not to come into clash with the Indian army as long as they were attacking the *Razakars* and Nizam's armed forces, but to launch independent attacks against *Razakar* and Nizam's police camps, destroy them, seize weapons, re-equip the squads with modern weapons and retrain them; wait for a few weeks, by which time the attacks on the Telangana peasantry by the Indian armed forces and their landlord-*deshmukh* gangs would shatter the illusions and hopes roused among the masses. They would by then not only demand the squads to go to their protection, and but would be ready to join the fight themselves.

Actually, within a week after the entry of the Indian army, the attacks began. There was a general and determined attack to destroy all the guerrilla squads and the Party and the *Sangham* organisation. Unfortunately, many of the squads and political organisers of the Party and *Sangham* were not in a position to meet the offensive, having developed illusions about the character of the intervention by the Indian Union.

Some of the area committees and their leaderships like in Huzurnagar (led by Dodda Narasayya), Bhuvanagiri (led by Arutla Ramachandra Reddy and Katkur Ramachandra Reddy), Palvancha area (led by Nallamala Giriprasad and Pullanna), and state leaders like Ravi Narayan Reddy and Baddam Ella Reddy advocated withdrawal of the armed struggle and taking to legal and other forms of agitation. Only the Suryapet-Khammam-Manukota area stood firm for continuing the armed struggle and defending the gains of the Telangana struggle. But all these comrades as well as most of the others who held similar views, carried on the armed struggle when the decision to continue it was finally taken. Some were arrested and imprisoned. Almost all of them are now with the Right Communist Party.

2. India's 'Police Action' People Avenge Razakars and Deshmukhs' Crimes

The Union Government launched "police action" on September 13, 1948, on Hyderabad State. Except in a few pockets like Kodada and Durachipalli, the Nizam's hordes did not resist the Union forces and readily surrendered. The Nizam Nawab himself, the ruler of the state, surrendered within five days of the 'police action', that is, on September 18, 1948.

The people and the armed squads utilised the opportunity of the 'police action' and attacked many *Razakar* and police camps, destroyed them and seized arms and other material. But there was not a single clash between the people's squads and the forces of the Indian army during this period.

As the guns of the Union armies roared and as the planes of the air force buzzed in the air on the borders, the news spread like wild-fire in all the army camps of the Nizam. The Nizam's army took to their heels, throwing their arms into wells in order to save their skin.

In Suryapeta Taluka

People and local squads in Suryapet taluka drove away the fleeing armymen of the Nizam, inflicting serious casualties on them and snatching away a large number of weapons. People also collected the rifles, sten guns, and hand-grenades from the Nizam's soldiers who had died as a result of bombing by the Indian Air Force near Durachipalli hillocks, and handed them over to the squads. People, moving like an avalanche, caught hold of the fleeing soldiers on the roads and across the fields and taught them a fitting lesson. Thousands of people marched on to Suryapet town as well, with a view to attacking the camp there and seizing weapons. But the Union military was already there and drove them away.

The *'gadi'* (huge mansion) of Jannareddi Pratapareddi in Suryapet taluka was as big as the central jail in Hyderabad, with strong foundations. Five thousand people participated in razing this huge mansion to the ground. Not an inch of the high wall was left. They tilled the land and sowed the whole area with maize seeds. As a mark of having put down Pratapreddy, they left a small mound in the shape of a *samadhi* (burial place). Two thousand bags of paddy were confiscated and distributed to the people.

In Manukota Taluka

Three thousand people and squads raided the Razakar camp in Nellikuduru village in Manukota taluka and forced one hundred *Razakars* to surrender along with their arms. As they took possession of the arms, and were thinking of putting an end to the worst criminals among them, the Union military entered the village and opened fire on the people. The people and the squads retreated with whatever arms they could take with them. They shot down two *Razakars*.

Another mansion in Kummarakuntla (Manukota taluka) belonging to the same family of Jannareddi was sought to be razed to the ground by three thousand people. So strong was the mansion that they could not accomplish the job completely. Four thousand bags of grain were distributed among the people.

The princely mansion of Ramasahayam Damodar Reddi, *deshmukh* of Marripeda (Manukota taluka), was totally demolished and roads were constructed over it to enable people to use it as a thoroughfare, which, at the same time, was an indication of the people's desire that they should walk on it all the time,

never allowing the *deshmukh*'s family to rise again from this 'grave'. Maize was sown in another part after demolition of the building; two thousand bags of paddy were shared by the people.

The Purushottamaigudem *gadi* was burnt down, after distributing hundreds of bags of grain stored there. The Chilukodu *gadi* was razed to the ground with crowbars, after hundreds of people emptied it, carrying away the grain for three days. Similarly, the grain of the landlord Raghava Reddi of Rayigudem was also distributed. Squads were on guard, while people carried away the grain.

The *gadi* belonging to the Suryapet Deshmukh in Kakarayi village (Manukota taluka) was razed by two thousand people who also distributed five hundred bags of paddy found in the *gadi*.

The rice mill and buildings costing Rs. 3 lakhs, belonging to Raghavarao, a landlord, were smashed. Fifteen hundred bags of paddy and another thousand bags of broken rice became the property of the people.

Thus, systematic destruction of buildings and other properties of the enemies of the people marked this campaign. Anywhere, in any village, wherever there was a *gadi*, people in their hundreds and thousands were seen marching on these fortresses of their sworn enemies. It was like an avalanche and all this happened within a day or two of the Union forces crossing the borders and entering the Telangana area.

In Manukota town, ten thousand people were disarming the big *Razakars* and *deshmukhs* who were raiding them till then. The Union soldiers entered the town, opened fire and saved these enemies.

Ten thousand people raided the Dornakal railway station on September 15 and seized 10,000 bags of paddy and distributed it. From the Papatapalli railway station, next to the Dornakal station, the people seized 300 bags of rice and 200 bags of paddy and got them distributed. All the levy grain which the Nizam police and *Razakars* had collected and kept in Garla was seized and distributed.

The bungalows of Jannareddi Pratapareddy, Gudur Ranga Reddy, and Pindipolu Jaggannath Reddy were protected by the Indian military deployment from the very first days. They prevented repeated efforts of the people who wanted to seek revenge for all the crimes they had committed on them during the Nizam-Razakar days.

In Suryapet taluka, the people attacked the murderer of a score of people, a hated landlord of Kasarlapadu. The Congress police lathi-charged them and saved him.

In Huzurnagar, the Betavolu zamindar's *gadi* was totally demolished and a huge quantity of silver and silverware, found hidden in its secret vaults, were confiscated by the people.

In Jangaon Taluka

The squads and people attacked the *Razakar* camp in the Visnur *gadi* in Jangaon

taluka belonging to Deshmukh Ramachandrareddi and mobilised ten thousand people. Some squads kept the people in the neighbouring villages ready to march, while other squads were laying siege to this *gadi*, when 120 soldiers of the Union armies entered the village, opened fire on the squads and rescued the *deshmukh* and his *gadi*.

Baburao (Jaganmohanreddi), son of the Visnur Deshmukh who personally shot dead tens of peasants and tortured hundreds, and the sub-inspector of the police station at Visnur, known for their atrocities on the people, bolted from their place to Jangaon without informing anyone, not even the police and military of the Nizam specially stationed at Visnur. They took temporary protection in the police station. But, some guerrilla squads and hundreds of people reached Jangaon by that time and they noticed this Baburao and the sub-inspector trying to make good their escape from the people's wrath by getting into a goods train just about to leave for Hyderabad. As they stopped the train, Baburao made the last attempt to save his life by going under the train. People smelt the rat, dragged him out and before he could use his revolver he was disarmed and beaten to death. He died, but the people who suffered untold atrocities at his hand, could not still quench their anger; they spat on his face. An old lambadi woman, narrated the inhuman tortures perpetrated by this Baburao on people, and spat on his face. People avenged their wrath on him as on Mussolini. People rejoiced over the end of this monster Baburao.

The sub-inspector whose head was broken but who was still trying to run away in the train unnoticed, was chased by the people. They got into the running goods train, snatched his rifle from him, beat him to pulp and got down from the running goods train at the next station, Aleru.

It, however, was not possible for the people to snatch away the arms from the police and military of the Nizam in Jangaon. They were inveigled by a Congressman who made the people believe that the Nizam police and the military would on their own surrender the arms. When the people returned from the railway station, they found the Bihari Regiment already on the scene. It opened fire on the people besides lathi-charging them and the people had to retreat.

The big *Razakar* camp at Laddanur (Jangaon taluka) was raided by three thousand people led by the squads. The *Razakars* were taking shelter behind the walls, as the members of the squads opened fire and pressed forward. Meanwhile, people who entered the village came from behind, swooped down on the *Razakars* before they could open fire and killed 23 *Razakars* on the spot, took possession of the arms, ammunition and the properties in the camp. Houses of those known to have indulged in sadistic killings of the people were also set on fire.

The news of this attack spread like wild fire to other camps and the inmates of the camps shivered in their boots. Inmates of Maddur camp (Jangaon taluka) welcomed the squads, garlanded them, surrendered their arms and ammunition to the last round and begged them to spare their lives. They also assured them that the losses inflicted on the people would be reimbursed. The squads accepted

their surrender, excused them and let them off. The same happened in the case of the Salarpur and Cherial camps and the Mushtyala taluka camp, all in Jangaon taluka. In the last camp itself they surrendered twenty rifles and saved their lives. But their properties as also of the zamindar were confiscated.

In Bhuvanagiri Taluka

The squads encircled the Motkur camp in Ramannapeta taluka and called upon the *Razakars* to hand over the arms and surrender. They resisted but got it hot from the squads. Two thousand people in the meantime entered the village and razed the houses of the enemies to the ground. Four of the enemies were killed. Women and children of *Razakars*, however, fell at the feet of the squads, begged them to save the lives of their husbands, pleaded with them to allow entry into the camps saying that they would convince their husbands and would force them to surrender. But, once they entered the camp, the *Razakars* took positions behind the women and children to open fire. This put the squads in a quandary. Opening fire would mean killing the women and children. They decided to withdraw, and later, they found only three bodies and three rifles. All the rest made good their escape. The three rifles were taken over; the police station was razed to the ground.

Three militarymen of the Nizam, who were passing through Eduluru village in Nalgonda taluka were chased by three hundred people of that village. But, the militarymen opened fire, killed two young men and escaped. The same soldiers, while passing through Bollaram village, similarly, opened fire and killed two more people.

Thirty of the Nizam's militarymen were killed in bombing by the Union Air Force near Narketpalli (Nalgonda taluka). No sooner the bombing stopped, than the people rushed to the spot, took possession of twentyfive rifles, two sten-guns, one guider and other weapons, and the gold and money, and handed them over to the squads.

Under the leadership of Comrade Pasam Ramireddy of Kurraram village, Bhuvanagiri taluka, the guerrilla squads organised a series of raids on *Razakar* camps in the taluka, captured their arms and forced them to surrender. In one such attack, Ramireddy was supervising the surrender of the *Razakars*, when some of them suddenly opened fire on him and killed him. The squad avenged their leader's death, but it was a great and irreparable loss for the Party and the movement. But all the *Razakar* camps were wiped out during those few days.

In Warangal Taluka

Squads had to wage a serious battle to destroy the Tatikonda camp in Warangal district. Only fifteen enemy soldiers were left in the camp, while hundreds of the rest ran away to Hanumakonda. Before daybreak, the squads, according to the plan, encircled the village and by daybreak, they closed on the camp bungalow.

The enemy soldiers were warned to surrender, but hoping that their friends who had gone to Hanumakonda would come back, they did not surrender. They shut the doors downstairs, got on to the first floor and took up positions. This made it a difficult task for the squads. However, the squads set up watch around the whole village, and kept on the siege of the camp.

The enemy was expecting to be relieved by forces which had gone to Hanumakonda but they did not come back as they were routed by the Union armies there. After one and a half days, they surrendered along with their arms. The soldiers were let off. The landlords and enemies of the people in the village, who were entirely dependent on these soldiers, got the fright of their lives. One Edumaddula Seshareddi, an enemy of the people, committed suicide. His son, Agareddi, and son-in-law Venkatareddi were killed, as they were running away. Seshareddi's brother Vankataramareddi tied up all the gold and cash round his waist and took shelter in a dust-bin covering himself under the litter. But the people scented him, dragged him out and killed him. There was no known atrocity which this family had not committed on the people of this village.

The Nizam's police in the Koyada camp in Huzurabad taluka received an ultimatum from the squads through two peasants from Poreddipalle village to surrender. The police did not yield. The squads rushed to the spot with three thousand people. But the sixty armed police stood their ground, opened fire, preventing the people from entering the village. One peasant died on the spot. The other people fell flat on the ground to avoid the bullets. The squads returned the fire. The police also fell flat on the ground. The battle continued and it was not possible for the squad to smash the enemy, but could kill only 12 of them. Later the squad retreated.

As the *Razakars* from the Japarghad camp, Warangal taluka, were trying to escape, squads from Warangal and Jangaon killed three of them, while the rest fled. Three weapons were confiscated.

In many places where centralised directions could not be given, people took the initiative themselves and did all they could to attack the *Razakars* and disarm them.

Buildings where the *Razakar* camps were set up, were razed to the ground; hundreds of bags of paddy, agricultural implements, iron, cattle, sheep and goats and whatever property of the enemy was available, were confiscated by the people.

Though the Union armies entered the towns and some important places and rescued the enemies and the *Razakars*, people in the rural areas, however, quickly acted even before the Union armies reached those places. In those villages where land distribution and *gram panchs* were not established due to existence of enemy camps, such reforms were quickly implemented by distributing thousands of acres of lands and by establishing Gram Raj Committees.

Muslim Masses were protected

It is to be noted that the Union armies rescued the very *deshmukhs* and the *Razakar*

leader Kasim Razvi, who were responsible for setting fire to village after village and killing hundreds of people. At the same time, the ordinary Muslim people, who stood against the atrocities of the Nizam, were pounced upon and untold miseries were inflicted on them. The Hindu people in those villages rescued such ordinary Muslim people to the extent possible, gave shelter to them in their houses and rescued thousands of Muslim families from the campaign of rape and murder indulged in by the Union armies.

The Telangana movement can take pride of this important achievement, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity in the villages, just at a time when Hindu-Muslim riots could be sparked off easily and could have spread like wild fire. In other parts of the Hyderabad State, where the democratic movement was weak, hatred against Muslims and attacks on them were widespread.

3. People's Relief–Short-Lived

The people were happy at the riddance of *Razakar* atrocities; they felt that they were going to have a new life. In many places, where earlier they could not lay hands on the lands of the deshmukhs or seize the grain of the landlords, because of the presence of the *Razakars* or Nizam's armed camps, now, under the leadership of the local squads and *Sangham* Committees, they started enforcing distribution of lands and grain. But this lasted a few days only, as within two weeks of the entry of the Indian armies, the *deshmukhs* and the landlords who had run away to the cities or to the Indian Union territory, returned to their villages, and joined hands with the authorities' massive attacks on the people, to seize back the lands and the grain. They pointed out to the police and the military the active Andhra Mahasabha (*Sangham*) workers, the squad members, their families, the peasants and agricultural labourers, who fed the squad (*dalam*) members and the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist workers. These had become special targets of the brutalities of the military. Mass arrests and mass beatings and mass tortures had become a common feature in hundreds of villages.

Most of the squads and local organisers (of the *Sangham* and of the Party) were carried away by the general enthusiasm. Most of the squads dumped their arms and returned to their villages. The Party leadership had to send repeated instructions and emissaries to all these places and explain the danger of their policy of disbanding the armed guerrilla squads and dumping arms, the danger of their becoming easy targets of the Indian Union military and police attacks and of the local landlords and *deshmukhs*. They were exhorted to take up arms and be ready to defend themselves and the people when the Indian armies and the new military government launched attacks on them.

The looseness of discipline and vigilance had a released overtaken the squad members, squad commanders, Party and *Sangham* leaders at zonal, area and regional levels, with the expectation that the Indian intervention would lead to

the riddance of the Nizam and of landlord oppression; and that a far better, free and democratic set-up would be ushered in. This caused havoc when the Indian army and the police launched their ferocious attacks on the people and on the squads and started restoring lands to the landlords and *deshmukhs* after they completed their takeover of the administration from the Nizam authorities. Thousands of local cadres, and a large number of zonal and area leaders got easily arrested. The remaining squads and leaders were mercilessly hunted by large combing operations and whoever was caught was brutally tortured and shot.

The Indian Union Government and its Congress leaders at no stage were anxious to abolish the native states and their rulers, the princes and nawabs, and merge them into neighbouring linguistic areas, and build a really democratic set-up for different nationalities and constitute a free democratic federation of India. All that they wanted was to inherit power from the British imperialists and develop their own capitalist (and profit-motivated industrialisation) and landlord exploitation. They did not organise or encourage the struggle of the people in these native states. They always sought to pamper the princes and hoped they would join hands with them against the British imperialists.

The British imperialists were forced to transfer power to the bourgeois-landlord Congress Party in 1947, after the people's upsurge that came in wake of the second world war because of its tremendously weakened position in the world set-up consequent on the emergence of the world socialist camp. The British not only partitioned India, they also declared that every Indian state could accede to either India or Pakistan or remain independent. The efforts of the Congress leaders were to undo this mischief and force the princes and nawabs in the Indian portion to accede to the Indian Union. The people's movements were called off the moment the princes agreed to join the Indian Union. Their privileges and purses were guaranteed, they were made *Raj Pramukhs* and different small princedoms were merged to create viable units and given a special place in the Indian Union. It was only in 1956 that under further advance of the democratic movement these states were abolished and merged into the respective linguistic states but the purses and privileges of the Rajas and Nawabs continued till 1972.

Consistent with this policy, the Indian Union Government tried to persuade the Hyderabad Nawab to join the Indian Union. Even when he refused to do so, before the deadline of August 15, 1947, a stand-still agreement was arrived at with the Nizam Nawab, arms and ammunition along with all his other privileges were guaranteed. He and his *Razakars* used these facilities to suppress the people's movement for merger into the Indian Union and for a democratic set-up. The Telangana people's agrarian and democratic movement was advancing rapidly. As Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Premier of the Indian Union Government, declared again and again, the Communists were already in control over more than two districts and they threatened to spread their grip all over the state. So, it was necessary to march in the Indian armies, not merely to force the Nizam to merge with the Indian Union but to destroy the Communists, that is, the agrarian

democratic people's movement in Telangana. Rajaji, the then Governor-General, openly in his proclamation, declared this as one of the objectives of the Indian army intervention.

So, it was no wonder that when the Nizam surrendered to the Indian Government, the Government of India promised him all his privileges and purses. The military rule of General J. N. Chowdhury and later the Vellodi Administration were all temporary phases till the Nizam was formally declared Raj Pramukh when the Indian Republican Constitution was ushered in on January 26, 1950. A large number of Indian Union officials and large number of police were brought in from neighbouring states to carry on the administration in the respective linguistic regions of the Hyderabad State. Practically, none of the old Nizam's officials were punished for the crimes committed against the people. After completing the take-over of the administration, and after his army and police personnel reached every nook and corner of the Telangana area, General Chowdhury's Government launched its massive offensive against the people of Telangana, in the districts of Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal and neighbouring areas to suppress and liquidate the people's agrarian and democratic gains.

It is no wonder that when Dr. Jaisurya, the noted democratic leader of Hyderabad and son of Sarojini Naidu, approached the military Governor to give him six weeks' time to contact the Communist leaders to arrange a settlement and make them withdraw the armed struggle, General J.N. Chowdhury haughtily rejected it and boasted that 'within six weeks he would liquidate the Communists all over the Hyderabad state'. The brutal military terror attack was launched within two weeks of the Indian army's entry and reached its full intensity by the end of December 1948.

To meet the Indian Union army offensive and defend and extend the gains of the Telangana people, the following programme was given by the Party leadership:

a. Defend old gains, in the old fighting areas and extend it to new areas. By preventing the enemy from stabilising himself in the old areas, while the movement was being extended to newer and newer areas, it would be possible to disperse his forces and make him lose heart and force him ultimately to a defensive position and defeat.
b. It would be wrong to think that the enemy had become victorious and the people had lost merely because the enemy had regained one village or its position in one centre, regained the land from the people, or because of continuous raids and white terror the enemy had been able to collect taxes or take away the crops, or because the members of village people's committees had been arrested or had got frightened. Till the enemy's offensive power was destroyed there was every possibility of the gains which the people achieved changing hands repeatedly. Ceaseless efforts must be continued and blow after blow should be dealt to the enemy repeatedly, and the earlier positions should be regained.

If the land was taken possession of by the enemy, see that the enemy could not make use of that. People can take possession of the crop or if it was not possible, destroy the crops on the land. The enemy must be driven out from the villages. Whenever possible, the peasants must get hold of or occupy the land and keep it for a few months or even for a few days in their possession. They must try to cultivate it themselves and harvest the crop. The enemy must not be allowed to raise any crop on it. If he raised it, he must not be allowed to reap or enjoy it. This struggle for land must be continued irrespective of the loss one might have to suffer financially and physically. The land might change hands not ten times but a hundred times. But the struggle must be continued till the enemy was driven out from the area finally.

c. In the old and new areas:
   - Drive away all the officials who were to collect taxes and supervise the collections.
   - Drive away the zamindars, deshmukhs, landlords and village officials.
   - Isolate the heads of tribes and of castes who live among the people but act as agents of the enemy.
   - Deal severely and mercilessly with informers of the police and the enemy.
   - Get the enemy camps vacated or destroy them from our protected bases. Prevent the enemy from carrying out raids on these from outside camps and gradually make it impossible for the enemy to enter these areas.

d. As for the issues concerned:
   - Foil the landlords and *deshmukhs'* efforts to forcibly seize the lands from the people. Wherever possible confiscate and distribute the lands of the landlords.
   - Conduct strikes for increase in wages, reduction of working hours, and for minimum number of holidays for agricultural labourers and farm servants.
   - Take up the debt issue of the toilers. The rate of interest must not exceed that fixed by the panchayat, 8-10 seers per 100 seers of grain. Protest strikes and social boycott should be organised against increased rates of interest and against attempts to withhold loans to the needy.

e. Build the mass organisations and the Party,
   - Agricultural workers should be organised in their own separate class organisation. The Andhra Mahasabha should function as the People's Democratic Front of all the revolutionary forces that were participating in the democratic revolution. Agricultural labourers, poor peasants, and middle peasants who agree with the policy of the Andhra Mahasabha could easily join it, they alone should elect their executive committee and they would function as the Panchayat Committee of the village. These panch committees would be the instruments of the struggle. As such, fighting persons alone were eligible for election.

- Build up volunteer squads from agricultural labourers (and poor peasants) and give military and defence training to them.
- Build the Party by recruiting those (i) 'who understand and accept the Party objectives and its programme, i.e., those who agree with directives, programmes and actions that are being carried in our guerrilla areas', (ii) those who have iron discipline based on democratic centralism, and having necessary political consciousness, (iii) those ready to sacrifice everything, their lives if necessary, for the sake of the Party, (iv) those with strict standards of people's morality, i.e., those possessing habits which shall not come in the way of the Party's prestige. No place in the Party for habitual drunkards and debauches (but normal drinking or sexual lapses within certain bounds as do not impair the Party's prestige and functioning to be overlooked, if other necessary qualifications for Party membership are satisfied). Educate Party members and develop secret methods of functioning.

Detailed instructions for the formation and functioning of small guerrilla squads, for secret functioning of the Party, the necessity of propaganda among the armed forces of the enemy, the necessity of exposure of other political parties and patiently explaining and winning over their following were all stressed.

2

Terror Regime and Resistance

The military regime under General J. N. Chowdhury launched its attacks on the people of Telangana immediately, within a fortnight, by September end. The formal struggle against the *Razakars* was stopped. Men like Kasim Razvi, who was the arch-criminal in the statewide killings and lootings, were only imprisoned and were given Class I treatment inside jails; many others were not even put behind the bars and were just let off. On the other hand, they started the campaign of suppression of Communists.

While establishing huge military camps in different parts of the state with hundreds of militarymen, they brought back to the villages those *deshmukhs* who had taken to their heels, those enemies of the people and Congress volunteers to re-establish their authority in the villages. Alongside every military camp was also a Congress office. Their job was to go round the villages calling upon the people to surrender to the military and to hand over squad members.

The burden of their song in every village was: 'We have now got people's *raj*. The Nizam is gone. Tell the squads to surrender along with arms. You also come to terms with us and give back to us all the properties, cattle, paddy and lands which you have taken from the *deshmukhs*. The Congress Government will later introduce land reforms and give land to you. We are all Hindus. Communists are Russian agents. Under the Communist Government, everyone will be *a* labourer. They do not observe any social formalities. All old people will be killed. Hence, do not believe them. You pay land revenue, grain levy and excise taxes. Later, the Congress Government will abolish the levy system. Despite all that we say, if you do not follow us, we will punish you. We have forces before which even a big fellow like the Nizam in one week had to surrender. Who are, after all, these Communists? We have very big weapons which can hit a target two miles away, planes, which can bomb villages, tanks that can crush everything on their path. We have come to protect you. You will be digging your grave if you do not pay heed to us'.

This was the kind of campaign they conducted in the villages in the first round. The Military Governor, General J. N. Chowdhury, also made a statement from Hyderabad, calling upon the Communists to surrender within a week, failing which they will be exterminated.

The party organisers and guerrilla squads undertook a whirlwind campaign to explain the nature of the Union Government. They told the people that the Congress committees were nothing but *deshmukhs'* committees, asked them to defend the land, cattle and the village panch committees they had won through struggle and not to be surrendered. During this stage, a song was very popular in Suryapet taluka, the meaning of which was: 'O, peasant, do you think of compromise; there can be no compromise between a cat and a mouse'. The song was written by a party member of Ramannagudem.

The military started direct attacks on the squads and people. They secured information about the Party and the Andhra Mahasabha organisers, as to who had joined which squad, which squad was an important squad, who stayed near which well or field and on that basis, concentrated their attacks on such places. Congress volunteers acted as the special intelligence branch of the military and secured information. They perpetrated atrocities on the people as the *Razakars* did, along with the military.

Military in big numbers moved in lorries and surrounded five to six villages at a time. They gathered people of all these villages at one place, beat them up, tortured them asking them to point out the Communists and the guerrillas. They would finish this work by 8 or 10 a.m., then go about the hillocks, mounds, rivulets, bushes in search of hiding guerrillas, and they used to return to their camps by evening. Thus, they took up one centre a day, or sometimes, two to three centres on the same day. These raids increased in number, intensity, and strength. They repeated this practice in one taluka after another. At times, 20 to 30 villages were encircled at a time.

These were called encirclement raids and any squad caught in this circle could rarely escape. To resist was all the more dangerous. Hence, keeping this in view, some changes were brought about in the organisation of squads, their number and methods of protection.

It was decided that the number of members of each squad should not be more than five, that they should wear the same dress as people wore, that they should not go about flaunting their arms openly, that they should leave the areas likely to be encircled if they came to know of it earlier. Village squads were asked to completely identify themselves with the local people and merge with them.

Despite all these precautions, it became increasingly difficult to protect ourselves. People, who were the main source of our protection, were not able to withstand this planned torture. Militarymen outstripped the *Razakars* in torturing the people. People used to say: 'Men who were satisfied with sheep have been replaced by men who are not satisfied except with a whole buffalo' (literal translation of a Telugu saying: '*Gorrelu tinewadu poyi, barrelu tinewadu vachhadu').*

Herding people at one place, beating them to reveal the whereabouts of Communists and to return *deshmukh's* properties had become the daily routine.

People were severely beaten up with lathis, butt-ends of guns and tamarind birches, without any discrimination between men and women, young and old. One military commander Sitapati, excelled himself in torturing the people. Tamarind canes were carved in the shape of hammer and sickle, and with them he used to get people beaten up so that the mark of the hammer and sickle was left on their backs.

Families of the Party members and of members of the guerrilla squads became special targets. Whoever was caught was inhumanly beaten up and tortured right before the eyes of the people.

Terror Methods

The Congress military regime in Hyderabad, the police, military and the Congress *Razakars* had let loose vandalism, terror and fascism on an unprecedented scale with a view to crush the heroic struggle of the people of Telangana.

- Military camps were erected all over fighting areas in Telangana at every 4th or 5th mile. Twice or thrice a day, villages around these camps were raided by the military and the people were systematically tortured. People in every village were herded at a place and brutally beaten. They forced the people to accompany them through forests, gardens, hills, et cetera, in search of Communists, and compelled them to give information. When they could not find anyone in the search, people were again beaten.
- In Torruru and other villages of Manukota taluka and in Huzurnagar taluka, people were tied to ropes and drawn up and suddenly dropped to the ground with a pulley system (like the one used to draw water from wells). Men were tied in gunny bags and soldiers threw them over a wall from one side to the other.
- Some soldiers caught hold of the arms and some others the legs of the people and swung them while some others kicked those swinging men with their nailed boots like foot-balls are kicked.
- People in masse were made to lie down in sand under the hot sun and were beaten. Some were tied to tree-tops upside down and were swung, and at the end of each swing, were beaten. Some were made to lie face downwards, a wooden plank placed on their back, two soldiers got on it at each end, and swayed and danced.
- Pins were thrust under finger-nails; branding bodies with red-hot firewood or iron was a common feature. People were also tortured with electric current.
- In Manukota-Khammam talukas, 10–25 villages were raided at a time. Hundreds of people used to be severely beaten up and made to run in front of running lorries. Whoever could not run ahead of lorries were tied behind lorries and dragged.
- The hands and legs of Comrade Veeraswamy, the village leader of Tettalapadu, were tied half way back and he was forced to crawl on the road on his knees and elbows. When blood flowed and he was unable to crawl anymore,

his head was bashed lathis and with stones, because he refused to reveal the whereabouts of his zone commander, Satyam. At this ghastly sight, women and children in their anger, threw dust at the police and abused them.

- All the people of Betalapadu of Illendu taluka were beaten. They were made to lie down, heavy stones were placed on them and soldiers started dancing over their bodies with nailed boots asking the people: 'Say now, where are the Communists?' 'is Congress rule better or Communist rule better?' After this torture, they were thrown into the Khammam cage.
- In Mannegudem, Pullepalli, Jayyaram of Manukota taluka, people were made to lie down and men on horses rode over their bodies.

In Loyapalli and surrounding villages, people were thrown into thorny bushes and were trampled upon by the military with their boots on. At 12 noon, in hot sun, people were made to crawl on those thorny bushes on their knees and elbows. The whole place was splattered with blood. Three hundred men became unconscious. When soldiers asked the people after all this Nazi torture, whether they would give up the support of Communists, the people replied in one voice: 'never will we give them up in our lives'.

In more than 2,000 villages of Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam, Karimnagar and Hyderabad districts, 3 lakhs of people were tortured in the above fashion and about 50,000 were arrested and kept in camps for a few days to a few months. More than 5,000 were imprisoned for years.

Rape and Vandalism

In perpetrating atrocities on women and raping them, the Congress *Razakars* and soldiers outbid even the Nizam *Razakars*. The nature of their crime can be understood from the following—

- In Ragipadu of Suryapet taluka, a woman who had given birth to a child three days earlier, was raped.
- In Tenugunta (Bhongir taluka), a pregnant woman was raped. In Narigudem, a woman who had delivered only the previous day, was raped.
- In Pushpavuru of Khammam taluka and in Yerrapadu of Bhongir taluka, even young 10-year-old girls were raped.
- The brutes raped 20 women in Balapala, 70 in Seemalapadu of Illendu taluka, 80 in Narmeta and Nanganuru villages of Jangaon taluka.
- In Neelayagudem because villagers gave rice to the guerrillas, everyone over 12 years of age was beaten and 15 women were brutally raped.
- According to available reports, mere than 1,000 women were raped during the first year and a few thousands during the whole period. Because of gang rape, more than 100 women died.
- Women's breasts were pulled and crushed with iron forceps, and babies were killed before the very eyes of their mothers.
- In Nereda, 70 women were stripped naked, chameleons tied to their thighs and chilly powder thrown into the wounds.

Sadistic Murders: Burnt Alive, Buried Alive, Butchered Masse

- **Comrade Rangayya** of Chandupalli was tied to a cart and burnt alive. He died shouting, 'Communist Party Zindabad'.
- **Comrade Ramulu** was caught in an encirclement raid at Miryala (Suryapet taluka). Failing to get any secrets from him, he was tied to a lorry and dragged on the road until his body was torn to bits.
- **Comrade Veerayya** of Koppolu (Nalgonda taluka) was tied to a lorry and dragged to death.
- A squad member near Nutankallu, Suryapet taluka, was tied to the wheels of a bullock-cart and the bullocks were whipped and he was crushed to death.
- **Comrade Venkata Ramanujachari,** organiser, Chitakodur was shot and, while still alive, was buried.
- **Comrade Muthayya** of Visnur and Comrade Appireddy of Kalmalacheruvu were burnt alive in hayricks.
- **Comrades Kavali Narayana** and **Sangayya** of Mugalipaka and three peasants of Puligalla of Bhongir taluka were burnt alive.
- **Comrade Ganji Satyanarayana** of Malkapuram, squad leader and **Comrade Harijan Muthayya,** had their eyes gouged out, testicles cut and thrust into their mouths, and later hacked to pieces.
- Two Koya peasants were trampled to death in thorny bushes by the military in the Perepally camp of Narsampet taluka.
- **Reddimalla Bakkayya's** (Kummarikuntla, Manukota taluka) head was smashed to pulp with big stones. Rosayya of Ailapuram, Narsampeta taluka, was laid on his back, rocks were thrown on the head and he was crushed to death.
- **Totori Yempalli,** leader of a village, was caught and rolled in red-hot sand for hours and beaten. His skin peeled off. He was kept in the Kothagudem camp where he died.
- Hot water was poured on a militant of Ashoka Nagar, Narasampeta taluka. His skin was peeled off, but he refused to reveal any secret and died.
- **Raghu Ramulu** was beaten and chilli powder was rubbed on his wound and hot water was poured on his bare body. He was tied to the body of another comrade, Bharri Narayana, and was threatened that he would be burnt alive. But he refused to divulge any secrets.
- **Comrade Yellaswamy** of Nomula village coming from an agricultural labour family, a reliable courier, centre organiser, was caught when trying to establish contact with the Manukota area and subjected to innumerable torture: flesh was cut from his body, nails were hammered into him, he was branded with red hot iron; still he refused to reveal secrets and was shot dead ultimately.
- **Jakkayya** of Solipuram of Janagaon taluka was bayonetted in the police station and later was laid on top of a wall, with weights hung from both his legs and hands and he was done to death.

- In Allapalli camp, Palvancha taluka, on a day in September, 45 were shot dead, among whom 18 were party members. The butchery continued and within 4 days, 119 were killed. In this camp, it is estimated that more than 300 were killed including 46 party members.
- In the Gadepadu and Gundala camps, 300 persons were shot dead.
- In Gadipadu and other camps established for Koya people evacuated from the forests, within two months, about 10,000 people died of cholera. Police shot dead 120 persons to force them evacuate their villages.

Loss of Large Number of Leading Cadre

Within a few months after the Indian army's intervention, a large number of our leading comrades lost their lives standing firm at their posts and defending the people.

Comrades Maccha Veerayya, Gangavaru Sreenivas Rao, B. Seshayya, Soyam Gangulu, Kunja Muthyalu of **Khammam-Madhira area;** Alwala Narasimha Reddy, Vallabhaneni Sitaramayya, Muthavarapu Venkayya, Balija Ramulu, Vediri Raji Reddy of **Miryalaguda-Huzurnagar area;** Sunkara Venkatappayya, Golla Muthayya, Vengala Papayya of **Munagala;** Kondala Reddy, John, P. Seetarama Rao, Anireddy Rami Reddy, Vatsya and Bimla of **Suryapet taluka;** Pasam Rami Reddy, Ramanujachari, Kodanda Rami Reddy, Gali Hanumayya, Suryanarayana, Paila Ramachandra Reddy and Gutta Seetarami Reddy of **Bhuvanagiri area;** Gabbeta Tirumala Reddy, Rekula Lakshma Reddy, Samuel and Ailayya of **Janagaon-Warangal area;** Dondeti Pullayya, Gandra Chandrayya of **Manukota area,** Rangachari and Komarayya of **Medak-Hyderabad City**— only to mention a few of about 500 party organisers and squad leaders who laid down their lives after the intervention of Indian army.

Brief sketches of some of these martyrs are given in Chapter X and as many names as are available of comrades who lost their lives both in the Telangana and Andhra areas are given in Appendix I. Unfortunately, only a few hundred names are available with us out of the nearly 4,000 who lost their lives during the course of five years of this glorious struggle.

Terror Fails

Even after one year of such terror, the people continued to defend their gains.

Raping of pregnant women, burning of people while alive, shooting at sight —despite such Nazi brutalities, people, under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party, stuck to their ground with determination and steadfastness. People were chasing back to the towns the *deshmukhs* and *jagirdars* who wanted to establish themselves in their villages with the military help. The Government could not stabilise itself in the countryside even after one year.

This can be seen also from the statement given by Konda Venkataranga Reddy

(State Congress Working Committee member), Burgula Ramakrishnarao and Dr. Chenna Reddi (all rabid anti-Communists) after their tour of Nalgonda and Warangal districts *(Golconda Daily, July 15,* 1949):

'The village panchayats organised by Communists are working as before. These panchayats decide every dispute in the villages. They are throwing out the *pattadars* and occupying lands. Because of the Communist activities, *patels* and *patwaris* dare not enter these villages. Village panchayats are collecting subscriptions for organising demonstrations, meetings, festivals, etc.'

'Those who came back to the villages after the police action (these are really *deshmukhs*—Correspondent) are fleeing back to towns because of the Communists. No regular weekly reports are reaching the police station from the villages.

'We can emphatically say that the Communist disorders and violence are increasing day by day. Certain high officials and Congress workers say that Communists are not properly distributing land; peace can be established if proper distribution is made.'

Why have the schools not been opened in the villages? Why are villagers insisting that teachers chosen by them alone should be employed? At one place, a school was opened on the condition that the pupils would be taught *burra kathas.* Why are villagers cutting down toddy trees, which are not numbered? Why are toddy shops being opened at many places without the Government's permission? Why are people cutting down tress in forests without the permission of forest officers? So far as we have seen, there is no collection of taxes, too. In some places, Government officials are not even making efforts to collect taxes from the people; there is no indication that rabi tax is being collected uptil now.

Government Official Revelations About Telangana Struggle

Here is a brief note of discussion with a high-ranking Hyderabad Police Official, published in the secret press at that time.

Q. Has the Communist movement in the State subsided?

A. No. It is still there. Their *goondaism* is still wide-spread.

Q. What are they doing?

A. They have formed armed squads. They do not attack the military face to face. They go into villages. There will be only 3 or 4 rich people in the village, who own all lands and buildings. All the rest of the people are very poor. These squads go into the village, instigate these poor people to kill them and destroy their properties.

Q. Is it not a fact that Communists rape women, loot properties and stab travellers on their way?

A. No, Communists do not do such things. You infer this from what you read in the press. But they do not do that. All their atrocities are on *deshmukhs* and *jagirdars.* They never touch the people.

Q. Why has not the Government suppressed them?

A. Yes, the Government is trying to do so all ways; but it is proving very difficult. Police camps have been opened for every 10–30 villages. A police officer of the rank of a circle inspector is in charge of every police camp. It is proving impossible for them to suppress the Communists. The people are not helping the Government in the villages; on the other hand, they are secretly helping the Communists. The Communists have arms. That is why the police are afraid of going near them. The level of their fear can be seen from the fact that when police go for raids, they ask their friends in the camp to carry their last words to their wives, in case they do not return. Nobody has the confidence that he will return from the raid. There are many a cause for such disillusionment among the police. All these policemen have come from Malabar and Mysore. They are new to this place and have left their families hundreds of miles away. There is no increase in their wages. The people won't supply curds and milk to the military even if they get paid. Military can get it only if force is used. Milk is not at all available now. As soon as the people come to know that a raid is coming, they throw away all the milk and curds. Due to all these causes, there are some police atrocities, too. People are bitterly criticising the Government and are suffering much due to police raids, especially in the surrounding villages near the police camps. People are highly afraid of the police.

Q. Why has the Government not increased the wages of the police?

A. There is strong discontent among the police for not increasing their wages. They have applied to the Military Governor through proper channels for increase in their wages but in vain. The Military Governor has severely warned them saying that they are going under Communist influence. There is Communist danger in four districts. Though there is no movement in the other districts, the situation is not satisfactory. Empty shells have to be shown to their officers if police fire on people. Failure means heavy punishment. The government suspects that they are selling bullets to the Communists and people.

Due to constant efforts and resistance of the guerrilla squads, even to that date, ten months after the Indian army intervention, *deshmukhs*, landlords and their agents could not settle down in their villages.

3

The Krishna Forest (Nallamala) Region

In different areas of the Telangana region, immediately after the Indian army's 'police action', there were expectations that a new democratic set-up would be ushered, in place of the old *Nizam-Razakar* regime, and that it would safeguard the gains of the people and assure them a better life. Many squad members and organisers laid down thier arms, carried away by the general enthusiasm. But as the landlords returned, and the Union Government intensified its military and police repression in all areas, squads were reorganised, arms taken up and defensive actions against the landlords and informers and police were begun.

But in the Nallamala region, the area leadership persisted for the whole year of 1949 with its line of no armed struggle, they laid down the plan of action which said: (i) dissolve the guerrilla squads and dump the arms; (ii) no action against the landlords and their agents until a powerful network of secret Party cells was built which on their own could take action against these elements; (iii) no action against the police and military as it would invite tremendous repression and destroy whatever organisation we might have been able to set up; (iv) people themselves to defend the land and cattle distributed earlier and not expect guerrilla squads to come and attack the enemy; and (v) dissolve the village people's councils.

This committee argued that its line of partial economic struggles and secret Party organisation was the only correct line till the situation in large parts of India developed anew. For them, the question of how to defend the gains already achieved, how to defend the Party and people's organisations under brutal repression was not the main problem facing them. It was pell-mell running away and surrender before the enemy.

Let us examine the events and developments in this area. The following extracts from the reports of local organisers sent to the State Centre give the picture:

'In the villages of Peddagudem, Garaguntapalem, amidst rains, people re-hoisted the Red Flag when they heard the landlord, Ramachandra Reddy, was returning to Miryalagudem along with the Indian military and police, and was expected to be in the village any moment. Not to have hoisted the Red Flag would have meant that villagers were not opposed to the return of this hated

oppressor, who was responsible for many raids on the village during the Nizam-Razakar period. The military asked them, who destroyed the bungalow of the landlord. The people replied that it was done by the Communists to teach him a lesson. This was the mood of the people'.

'In Tadakamalla zone from the middle of November 1948, the police and military intensified raids. On December 8, along a stretch of 50 miles (80 kms) from Vadapalii to Tadakamalia, 2,000 or more armed personnel were deployed on simultaneous day-and-night raids from the Motekur and Bhimavaram camps. A number of squad members and organisers were arrested and some surrendered. Under terrific torture, some arrested persons gave out certain information. Yet, the morale was high. During these raids, and for a little time afterwards, guerrilla squads took counteraction and opened fire on the Motekur camp killing 2 policemen; it was vacated but re-established with heavy reinforcements. Squads destroyed the tobacco crops of the landlords of Bhimavaram and Kamatipuram and distributed the paddy of the landlords of not only these two villages but also of Topucherla, Medagalapalli, Cheemvaripalli, Pasalpadu, Kamassagaram, and that of the Babashahebpet *Deshmukhs* to the extent of about 1,000 quintals. Strikes agricultural labourers for increased wages were organised successfully. In this zone of 50–75 villages, people successfully harvested their crop over 5,000 acres including 1,000 acres of wet lands, which were distributed to them earlier'.

'The enemy combed zone after zone, arresting *on masse* militants who had participated in any activities in the past. They resorted to untold atrocities to terrorise the masses and prevent them from giving any shelter or help. Their raids on the Penubadu centre of Suryapet taluka and on the Cherukapalli and Nakrekallu centres of Nalgonda taluka forced the squads and organisers to retreat. In the Tadakamalla centre, in the intensified raids the people were forced to accompany the military to comb fields for the Party and squad members. The people did not catch us but told us to go away to some shelters for the time being and return later'.

'We would not stay in the houses in any village because every house was being searched during the raid and any new-comer was being found out with the help of the local landlords. We split ourselves into small groups of two and three and mixed ourselves with the people in the fields. The enemy could not locate us at first and they thought that we had all run away from the zone. The village *patwaris* started collecting taxes but the guerrillas shot dead the *patwari* of Chalamarti. With that, the patels and patwaris refused to return to the villages and collect taxes.'

'But more and more police camps were established closer and closer and the raids increased. We were forced to retreat completely from the zone. After our retreat, the landlords and their agents once again raised their head, and began to point out the village cadre to the police. This made a general retreat necessary'.

'It was just at that time that the area leadership forced us to dump our arms. We pleaded with the leadership that in our centre of 10 villages (Tettagunta)

were 30 exposed cadre and if no weapons were given to them, most of them would be lost in the enemy raids, as they would not have anything to protect themselves with, against the landlords, treachery, and attempts at capturing and handing them over to the police and military. But the leadership refused to budge. Except for a very few, the rest of the cadre in the Tadakamalla, Cherukupalli, Nekrikal zones were arrested in no time'.

— From a report *of the Tadakamalla* Zone Secretary at the *beginning* of 1950, Here is an extract from another report from the area:

'The enemy resorted to atrocities unheard of even in the *Razakar* period. Throwing the people into thorny and prickly pear bushes and dancing on them with heavy-shod military boots on, forcing the people to crawl for furlongs in the hot sun, hanging the people upside down from tree-tops, and kicking them like a ball with booted legs, releasing the ropes suddenly from the tree-tops throwing the people down on to the ground covered with pebbles and stones and road-making material, shaving the heads of women, raping them—these are some of the modes of the enemy's atrocities. They were able to shoot down two or three squads of the Suryapet area bordering on our area. Some of the important comrades of Munagala Paragana were also shot dead.'

'The enemy demanded that the people restore to the landlords and *deshmukhs* the lands and cattle that had been distributed. They demanded of the people to hand over the Communists. They demanded that the people pay back all old loans to the moneylenders and landlords. But the people, on the whole, refused to part with the land and cattle.'

'With these constant raids the landlords and their agents raised their heads and carried on the enemy propaganda. They tried their best to persuade the people to hand over the Communists. In the Tadakamalla zone, the landlords tried to persuade the people, telling them: If we hand over the Communists to the Government, the Communists would come and take action against the culprits and straightaway shoot the culprits dead. But if we do not hand them over to the Government, the police and military will come and subject us all indiscriminately to all kinds of tortures. It is better to hand over the Communists than to undergo these tortures. But the people refused to pay any heed to these words.'

'Once the landlords of Tadakamalla and their agents pursued the local organiser for 2 miles and caught him. (He had no weapon with him). They brought him to the village and wanted to hand him over to the police later. But the poor men and women of the whole village gathered round and demanded that he be set free and that they would rather lay down their lives than allow him to be handed over to the police. The landlords were frightened. The people took the comrade to their house, bathed him in warm water, feasted him and sent him to a safe shelter.'

'Again, in another village, when another comrade was caught by the landlords, the people gathered and forced them to release him.'

'The people of Neredacherla and Vijayanagaram fought against the landlords and did not surrender their lands. When the son of the zamindar of Dachavaram

along with the Fattepuram zamindar (Kotagiri Rao) and some Congress volunteers went to the village of Dachavaram, the whole village gathered round them, abusing them in the choicest language, and were about to kill them when they ran away. These *zamindars* brought the Nizam's police and Razakars and got eight peasants of the village shot.'

'The women of Vijayanagaram surrounded the military lorries when the military rounded up their husbands and were taking them to jail. The military beat them with branches of thorny bushes but yet they refused to budge. They demanded that their husbands be released. The military had to release them ultimately.'

'In Munagala Pargana, the people of Ramasamudram stayed on before the military camp in the village for 2 days demanding release of their village leader. The military shot him dead. The people demanded that his dead body be handed over to them and refused to budge. They got the dead body of their beloved leader, Sunkari Venkatappayya. They took out a huge procession and paid their last respects to their martyred leader.'

'The leadership of the area committee saw the temporary fear of the people about the atrocities of the enemy, but did not realise the love and confidence they reposed in us. The leadership did not see the hatred of the people for the enemy. They did not see the enthusiasm of the people at the news of our squads taking actions against the enemy in the Devarkonda and Miryalgudem zones. The leadership of the area committee saw only our losses and the enemy concentration and decided to stop the armed struggle and gave us a programme of partial struggles and building up of the Party without resorting to actions against the landlords and the police. They asked us to dump arms.'

The Disastrous Effects of this Policy

'With the dissolution of squads, the landlords, the enemy and CID men in the villages raised their head. They became bold and began informing the enemy about our whereabouts and got them to raid our villages and arrest our cadres'.

'The police came to know that we had dissolved our squads and we were in cells of 3 without arms. Emboldened by this knowledge, the police dressed in ordinary civilian clothes, hiding their modern weapons under their clothes, used to come in small batches of even two to three in search of us. We could not attack them or capture their arms as we had no weapons with us'.

'In Kondrapolu, our bitter enemies, Veerareddi and Ramireddi, stayed openly in the village and carried on their atrocities. It was they who caught Comrade Saidulu and tortured him and handed him over to the police who shot him dead. The landlords of Irukugudem caught hold of Comrade Lachchulu and those of Jillalpuram caught hold of Amritam and handed them over to the police who shot them dead. Potireddigudem landlords caught hold of two comrades including the secretary of the cell and those of Topucherla caught hold of another and

all were handed over to the police. In Neredacherala, the notorious rowdies, Anantam, Talla Chandrayya and Ramulu, who were responsible for many atrocities and rapings even earlier, handed over two of our comrades and planned to get hold of all our important comrades. Fortunately, we were not there at that time.'

'The local comrades discussed the situation and asked for permission to kill these landlords who were responsible for our comrades being shot, but the area committee refused to give permission and stuck to its position of no armed action. The Penubadu organiser demanded again and again that the informers in his zone be punished. But we could not give permission because of the area committee's strict mandate.'

'It has become difficult to maintain even contacts with the people in face of these informers and the intensified raids of the police and the military, guided by the landlords and their agents. The people were fed up. They demanded again and again that we should take up arms and kill the enemies. They began to question where our squads had gone and how long they were to keep quiet like this without killing the enemy.'

'We, too, were fed up with the situation. We attacked the Alagapuram and Neredacherla *goondas*. With this, the *goondas* and the hated landlords started running away, once again, from the villages to the police camps and to the towns. We were forced to take these actions when we were left with no other option; we must be ruthless to the enemy. But when we take any action against the enemy, all exposed cadre, whether party members or militants, must be withdrawn from the village, at least for the time being. Otherwise, the enemy would shoot them dead.'

'At last, we reorganised our guerrilla squad in December 1949, according to the direction of the State Committee. A number of enemies in Tadakamalla, Munagala and Vijayanagaram zones had been killed and their property destroyed. People cooperated with the squad with great enthusiasm. They sheltered it and helped it in various ways, in carrying out actions against the enemy. When the squads took shelter in the forests nearby, when raids were going on, people sheltered us in the Kalmalacheruvu and Vijayanagaram centres in the plains. *Patwaris* and the hated landlords fled from the villages. There was great enthusiasm among the people.'

'In the Huzurnagar zone, in Mollacheruvu, landlord Sambireddi and his *goondas* got all our local cadres arrested, including central organisers, Devulapalli Raghava Rao and Saidulu Reddi, and the latter was shot dead by the police. In Algapuram, Pakirayya got our local cadres arrested. Similarly, Mattampalli, Kapugallu and Betavolu became centres of enemy activity. The squad leader, Veerabhadrayya, was arrested and others were forced to leave the area for distant places.'

'In the Miryalagudem zone in January 1949, the enemy intensified raids and began to collect grazing fees and land taxes; and the landlords began to bring

pressure on the peasants to pay the tax arrears and give up the lands. But our squads at that time surrounded the police camp in Alwala and Ramanagudem and killed some traitors. Collection of taxes came to an end. But by April, the enemy increased the number of his camps and raids and the area committee forced the squads to dump the arms.'

'But the people demanded wherever we went, after we returned in June from shelters in the Union territory, 'take action against the Chelakurti rowdies. Without that, do not come to us. If you plan action against them, we will join you in that'. The area committee refused to give permission. So, even when the main *goonda* leaders of Nandikonda, Venkatareddi and Cheekati Lakshmayya, were caught in a drunken state, we let them off. The area committee countermanded our decision to kill Chirra Venkata Reddi, hated in about 15 villages, who was also responsible for the death of Comrade Vallabhaneni Seetaramayya.'

'In Vengannagudem, Kondaram Balakoti, headman of a notorious landlord (Ramanuja Reddi), used to accompany the military and direct its raids on the people. The Somisettipalem landlords tried to catch us when we were moving in those villages. When the people hoisted red flags, the enemy beat them mercilessly as much as they had done when we attacked the military near Rajaram, Because we distributed leaflets in Sreenivasapuram. Tirumalagiri, Rangundla and Garaguntapalem, the people of all these villages were made to crawl on their knees and elbows and were beaten.'

'So, it was wrong to think that enemy repression came only when we attacked the police or killed the hated landlord oppressor. Without killing the enemy when they resort to violence, even self' protection cannot be guaranteed.'

'We reorganised our squads by December 1949, according to the State Committee's decision, over-ruled the area leadership's line and instructions.'

Agricultural Labour Stuggles

'In June 1949, in Huzurnagar zone, immediately after the 'dump arms and no armed actions', line, we organised labour strikes in the Kalmalacheruvu and Mellacheruvu area. We could achieve partial success in the beginning, but before we could intensify them, the enemy brought the police and the local landlords started capturing our cadre and handing them over to the police, as in the case of D. Raghava Rao and Saidulu Reddi. We did not take action against them, they had a free hand, and let loose terror.'

'In the Miryalagudem zone, we tried to organise agricultural labour strikes in Tirumalgiri and half a dozen villages but the enemy raids started. The members of strike committees and others had to run for their lives. Partial success was achieved only in Nellikallu, Chintapalem and Sunkesula, because there we had earlier driven away the *goondas* and the police agents from the villages. Again, in December, during harvesting season, we organised agricultural labour strikes in about 8 villages and enforced even 10 seers of paddy in certain villages as

daily wage, but the enemy surrounded the villages and started arresting the cadre and militants and it was with great difficulty that they could save themselves.

'In the Vijayanagaram centre, the agricultural labourers struck work and won an increase of one or two seers of grain per day, but they could not retain them for long because of the intensified raids. In the Tadakamalla centre, the agricultural labourers began to talk about wage-increase—procured by the villages near the forests by getting the protection of the guerrilla squads there and that they should do the same here.'

'In the Vadapalli zone, we started agitation for agricultural labour demands. But, because of the line of no armed actions against the landlords, they got emboldened, brought the police and beat down the labour in the villages of Gudur and Japtuveerappagudem. It became very difficult to bring these agricultural labourers again into the struggle and it took four months. The landlords in other villages also began to copy the example of these two villages. In Mulukulakaluva, the landlords and their agents chased our Party cell for 4 miles and it could escape from being captured only by running into the forest. We, the zonal leaders, were in a fix. We decided that if we did not take actions against the landlords there would be neither agricultural labour strikes nor even Party cells and we would have to evacuate the whole zone.'

'So we gave a good thrashing to the enemy landlords and their agents of Kondrapolu, Bottalapalem and Mulukalakalva; destroyed the water-drawing appliances of the landlords of Gudur and other villages. In fact, we should have finished the gang of Mulukalakaluva. But we did not do it because the line was not to kill even the enemy of that kind. The result was, now they had gone into the police camp and had become a great menace.'

'After these limited actions against the landlords and their agents by us, the landlords dared not lift their head and we could move the agricultural labour into action. In many of the villages where we conducted struggles, the police came into the villages, but no one gave them any information. We actually led the agricultural labour strikes in 14 villages. In 11 other villages, the agricultural labourers moved on their own. We won all these strikes. But the moment our activities lessened, the landlord sections tried to go back on the agreements. They got the police and the military to raid the villages. We could have kept up the gains if we had taken effective action against the landlords.'

'Again in November 1949, there was another wave of agricultural labour strikes by day-labourers, farm-servants and even handicraftsmen. They won 6 seers of paddy during the harvest season and in some villages like Rayanapalem (Ramapuram) where the lands were fertile, they got even 10 seers per day. The share-croppers got 2/3 of the crop as against the 1/3 previously. These strikes covered a largo number of villages and greater number of persons participated in them. There was a new tempo in the strikes. Women came forward along with the men to fight the landlords and seize the grain from the landlords' houses and distribute it among themselves. They participated in demonstrations taking knives or whatever weapons they could lay hands on.'

'There were strikes during the groundnut plucking season in October as well as during the harvesting of short-term crop of "variga" in January–February 1950. All these strikes were led by the strike committee formed during the course of the struggle.'

'The landlords got frightened with these waves of strikes and the morale of the strikers rose higher and higher. Its influence was felt even on washermen in the town. We could not lead their strike as we did not have links with them. But we prevented blacklegs from Venkatadripalem from going to the town. The town washermen won their demands.'

'The Government, seeing the success of the washermen's strike and the wave of agricultural labour strikes, intensified its raids like a mad dog. It raided the forest with thousands of armed personnel. With these raids, once again the landlord section raised its head and hatched plots. They sent word to the enemy about our whereabouts. They handed over Lachhulu, Amritam and Vediri Rajireddu. They got the leaders of the strike struggles in various villages arrested. If we had taken action against the enemy from time to time and finished some of the worst in the gang, they would not have dared to lift their heads. Again, we should have gone on recruitment all exposed cadre into regular squads and retreated to the forests. But we had been following at that time a policy of no armed guerrilla struggle, and no recruiting of new members to guerrilla squads and we had no idea of extending the movement to new areas.'

Question Over the Land

'In Mukundapuram, a peasant, Kummari Muttayya, did not give up his land. He was tortured to death. He died with the words: this land is mine. I will not give it up, on his lips. Even after his death, his brothers and his wife stuck to the land. They said that they would rather give up their lives but not the land.'

'In Moddulakunta the landlord Ramalakshmi brought the police and got a lambadi peasant beaten to pulp as his occupation was related with land. After this, he was afraid to continue the cultivation of the land. His wife goaded him and the two of them ploughed up the land. The guerrillas later gave this particular landlord a good thrashing.'

'We saw that the mere propaganda that 'the land is yours, you can go and cultivate it' did not lead anywhere. The landlords were taking advantage of our 'no armed struggle' line and getting the police and the military to terrorise the peasants. We decided to give them a good thrashing. The guerrillas killed the landlord who brought the police and got Kummari Muttayya tortured to death. With these attacks, new enthusiasm spread among the peasants.'

'One poor peasant near Kondrapolu, where there was a military camp of 150, occupied his land seized by the landlord, cultivated it and successfully retained the crop.'

'The peasants demanded that lands seized by the landlords be restored. They

demanded that waste lands be distributed. We allowed them to clear only a limited forest area for cultivation because we thought that if we allowed them to cut all the trees in the small forests, then there would be no protection for the squads.'

'It was only in the far-off plains with which we could not keep regular contacts that the biggest landlords could reoccupy the lands from the peasants and that, too, in villages where there were police camps. In Ragadapa, In the Tummadam Deshmukh's lands and Soorayapalem temple lands, all of which were in the very villages where the military camps were posted, we saw to it that nobody turned up to cultivate them for the landlords.'

'In the following 20 villages, in the Vadapalli zone, the peasants occupied the lands seized by the landlords and cultivated them even during this period.

1. Annaram 2. Bothalapalem 3. Bejjikallu 4. Chennaya-palem 5. Damaracherla 6. Gudur 7. Japtuveerappagudem 8. Jillalpur 9. Kallapalli 10. Kondrapolu 11. Kothagudem 12. Mettagudem 13. Moddulakunta 14. Mukundapuram 15. Mulukalakaluva 16. Neelayagudem 17. Rayanapalem 18. Tettagunta 19. Veerappagudem and 20. Veerlapalem.

'In Dachavaram, Etavaram, Kotagiri, and the people did not give up the land. The poor peasants of Gottapalli, Mukundapuram, and Vaikuntapuram came to us and narrated how the landlords had once again seized their lands, after beating them and getting their sons arrested. They asked us to go and help them to take back possession of the land. They said, 'you first come once and warn the landlords. We will plough and cultivate the lands'. We did not go to help them with our new line of no armed actions. We wanted the poor peasants to fight all on their own against the landlords, the police and military, without our leading them and that, too, with no weapons in their hands.

'In the Tadakamalla centre, where our links with the villages were broken the moment we laid down arms, the people waited for us for a long time, and only then they allowed the lands to be occupied by the landlords. Whenever any of our comrades happened to meet them, they told him how the land which was distributed was seized by a landlord, how they suffered and asked us to show them the way. We used to ask them to resist the landlord to go and occupy the land and cultivate it'. We would tell them that our days will come soon. We will destroy the enemy. The peasants must protect your Party and give us shelter. The peasants used to sigh and go away despondently, hoping that those promised days would come soon.'

'In the Penubadu centre also, because we could not maintain contact, the landlords occupied the lands. Yet after two months of 'no armed struggle' line there was a little respite from the enemy raids. Immediately the people moved to occupy their lands. They wanted to take away the crops on lands cultivated by the landlords. The landlords got panicky and begged for a compromise. Our local cadre led this upsurge. This was so in the villages of Battonikunta, Chintakuntla, Neredacherla, Takkollapadu and Utlapalli, Vaikuntapuram and Vijayanagaram'.

'Similarly, in Kallur, Medavaram and Vijayanagaram, the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants demanded that the landlords sell the grain at the rates fixed by the Party. Otherwise, they would confiscate and distribute it. We warned the landlords and they had to sell it at cheap rates.'

'The enemy intensified its raids. The landlords raised their head once again and began to hand over our cadre to the police. We immediately decided to kill these landlords on our own in the villages of Chintakuntla, Chillapalli, Nereducherla and Ravalapenta but they had already run away. Yet we destroyed property belonging to them and confiscated some. We killed the enemy in Chandupatla. The enemy got demoralised and lost hope in the police and military protection. The morale of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants rose. They came forward in greater numbers to give us shelter and to reoccupy their lands. In Vijayanagaram, when a landlord wanted to sell the land which he had seized earlier from a poor peasant the poor peasant, warned him not to sell it as it was his land, and occupied it. When the people insisted again and again that the landlord be killed, only then we took action against him. In Chintakuntla, an elder brother was put in jail and then the younger one took his place and refused to give up possession of the land. After these actions, even in the Penubadu centre the landlords called the peasants and gave them 1/3 of the crop, lest we attack them for occupying the lands.'

'In the Huzurnagar zone, when the enemy raids became intensified and we with the 'no-armed-struggle' 'line left the land question to the people to manage as best as they could, in a number of villages they came to us and asked us to warn such and such a landlord so that he would not seize the lands from the peasants. We did not lead them, we thought the people were not prepared to fight on their own'.

'The Anantagiri Deshmukh reoccupied the lands from the peasants immediately after the Union armies entered. The landlords of Chilukur, Erravaram and Ganapavaram and Kapugallu reoccupied the lands once distributed. Yet some peasants did not give up their lands restored to them during the Nizam regime.'

'In a number of villages, people brought to us the question of land seizures. We used to put them off saying: 'It is not the proper time, wait for a few days. But do not give up the land even if the police beat and kill you.'

'We could not intervene and allowed the landlords of Revuru and Ramapuram to sell a part of their lands.'

'In the Betavolu centre, people did not give up the lands and resisted police atrocities and asked for our advice and help. But we did not help them. Ultimately, they had to give up the lands, hoping that better times would come and they would again be able to occupy their lands.'

'In Velidanda, the lands of the landlord, Ramchandrareddi, and those of the Dacharam Deshmukh were distributed. These landlords tried to take possession of the lands and the peasants resisted for a long time and came to us seeking help but we only preached them not to give up the land nor pay any rent. But they were ultimately forced to give up the lands as the raids increased.'

'In Betavolu, the landlord, with the military's help, got the peasants to put his share of the crop separately. The peasants saw the heap of paddy with burning hatred'. 'How can we hand over this golden paddy? Even if we cannot consume it, it does not matter. The landlord must not get it. So burn it'. Our local cell, in the midst of concentrated enemy raids, could not fulfil the wishes of the peasantry.'

'In Burgugadda, the people cleared up *poramboku* (waste) lands and cultivated them. The landlords, after the advent of the Indian Union armies, occupied the grazing lands of the peasants and began to collect from the peasants Rs. 50 per acre of each plot of *poramboku* land. The peasants and agricultural labourers came to us and asked us to finish off these landlords. We replied that it was not time, we would make the landlords shell out every pie they had collected. This was the line of 'no armed struggle.'

'In Miryalagudem zone, in Musumpalli centre, the enemy was able to occupy lands and even stay in the villages because we would neither go there nor even keep contacts.'

'In Ramadugu centre, the landlords occupied the lands from the peasants in Garaguntapalem, Peddagudem, Kosalamarri, Marepolli and Yacharam but we took action against the landlords in Garaguntapalem and Teppalamadugu, Koppolu and Chepuru; the landlords of all these villages ran away with them and began to live in the police camp. They brought the military at the time of harvesting and snatched the crop from the peasantry.'

'In the Rajaram centre, the people were able to get the crop from the lands in spite of the military raid. The landlords tried to collect Rs. 100 per acre and seize the grain from the peasant houses, but they failed. The people did not surrender the grain nor pay any cash. The lands of Ramanujareddi, Vallabhareddi and of the Tummadam Deshmukh were left uncultivated for the whole of the year 1949. Only with the establishment of the military centres, could they cultivate the lands employing farm servants.'

'In Kokkayagudem, Surepalli, Tirumalagiri and Vengannagudem, the peasants cultivated the lands and we asked them not to pay any rent to the landlords. In Nellikallu, in Chitapalem, and in Nidigadda and Malakacherla, we helped the peasants to retain the crops. We helped the peasants of Tumukuntala, Bhethivenkanna Tanda and Kompalle to occupy the illegally seized lands and cultivate them. In these villages where we were able to maintain close contacts, the enemy could not even seize crops with the help of the police and the military.'

Lambadi People Support our Squads

'In Nadigadda Tanda, 10 women were raped in front of their husbands. In Koyyagudem Tanda, women were molested and brutally tortured, women's heads were shaved, yet they continued to support and protect the squads. In Tungapati Tanda, Bimla Naik was shot dead because he refused to reveal secrets of how the guerrillas successfully raided a bus in November. In Mellacheravu, it was the lambadi people who helped our squads to trace the *goonda* and betrayer,

'*Sambudu*', who was responsible for the shooting and killing of our Comrade Saidulu Reddy, and for the arrest of Raghavendra Rao. Many a time, they brought the news of impending police and military raids and saved our squads. Many a time, when proper guidance was given, they fought against their own caste leaders and landlords, as in Mellacheruvu Tanda, against landlords belonging to the Manche family. In Yatavakilla Kallapalli Tandas they fought for land and for fair wages for agricultural labourers against their own landlords and regained the lands lost due to excessive usury or rents. They forced higher taxes on the landlord sections and lowered the tax burdens on the poorer sections of their tandas. In Mellacheruvu, the lambadi tanda people were able to retain the lands which they had been cultivating from the time they had cleared the forest. In Kallapalli, Nadigadda, Chintalapalem, Moddulakunta and in other tandas they fought and got their wages increased. We also saw that when these class battles were fought there, many old obscurantist customs were loosened and they started adopting progressive habits and practices'.

Village Councils

'The enemy tried his best to liquidate our village committees and re-establish the rule of *patels* and *patwaris*. But all his hopes were shattered because the people went to those few people of the village committees who were still honest and away from betrayals and arrests and got their disputes settled by them. People did not go to the Government's courts however big the issue may be. This was the case in the villages of Vijayanagaram, Medavaram, Vaikuntapuram, Saidabbasgudem, Pattepuram and Jonnaladinne. We do not have the reports from Tadakamalla centre. Even the Congress Government, when it found that it could not carry on with *patels* and *patwaris*, had to set up some village councils with those whom the people elected. This itself will show how much the people love this embryonic people's democratic raj'.

'The area committee's decision to dissolve the village committees which even the Government failed to liquidate was very harmful. We must promote agricultural labour and poor peasant cadre into these village committees to make them effectively function during these critical times'.

'In the Miryalagudem zone, in the centres of Nellikallu and Nadigaddu, we were able to keep in close touch with the people through the village people's committees and were able to solve their problems. The result was that the people helped us in many ways. They even participated in actions against the enemy and in destroying roads. In other centres, where we dissolved the village committees, we could not keep in touch with the people and could not move them into action either for land or against the enemy'.

'In Huzurnagar town, after dissolving the village committees and with no guerrilla actions against the enemy, even the honest elements in the village committees could not come forward and settle the people's disputes. As a result,

the Party organisers were forced to settle these affairs, when the people found them and approached them. More often they used to postpone the issues, asking people to have patience'.

Party Organisation

'During the *Nizam Razakar* days, we took in the a large number of militants who came forward as Party members. But we could not politically educate them and develop them enough. The result was, after the Indian army intervention, with the increasing terror, many of them became inactive. It was difficult to save them with the area committee's line of dissolution of armed guerrilla squads and concentration on local struggles sticking to the villages where they had come from.

'During the enemy terror, many of the local cadre left their villages. We told them to go back 'explaining' that they were not exposed in the villages, there was no danger for them and that we could not provide protection to all of them: they did not agree to go back without arms, without shelters. But they were forced to go back. Most of them got arrested'.

'The women comrades from the Suryapet town wanted to come and join the guerrilla squads or political squads as they were exposed but we refused to take them and sent them back. They were arrested a week later'.

'In Kalamalacheruvu, two of the local cadre wanted to come out of the village and join our squads. We refused to take them into our squads. Similarly, because we refused to take the exposed cadre of Chilkuru, Narayanapuram, Yellapuram, Burgugadda and Macharam, most of them got arrested'.

'From Adividevulapalli, two wanted to join the squad but we refused. They had to leave the village and go away to Union villages to escape arrest. Ramulamma recruited militants from Malakacherla, but we refused to admit them and sent them back on the ground that we could not provide shelters. Our whole outlook was coloured with the idea that if we could save those who were in the squad, that itself was a great achievement, why take in new-comers and burden ourselves at this juncture'.

'In Vadapalli zone, with agricultural labour strikes, waves of large numbers of militants had come forward. We organised some of them into cells. More than 200 of the cadre came in these struggles. Many of them were prepared and they even pressed to be taken into our squads, but we refused. So when the enemy intensified the raids, many of them were arrested. The rest had to leave the village and go to coastal districts to escape arrest'.

After the Formation of Regular Guerrilla Squads

'By the time the guerrilla squads were reformed and the Party in the area was again put back on the rails of armed guerrilla struggle, Chelakurti, Mattampalli, Nereducherla, Kondraprolu, Adividevulapalli and Kopugallu had become Congress

rowdy centres. Home guards were organised the rowdy gangs and landlords' sons'.

'The guerrilla squads attacked these centres and killed some of the worst gangsters. In Chelakurti there was a police camp, too. Yet squads attacked the Home guards and killed seven of them. Now this centre of terror has subsided. The remaining Home guards and landlords said that they would not go to other villages. That it was enough if they could keep off the Communists from carrying on their activities in this village'.

'In Mattampalli there was a camp with 30 armed policemen and 50 Home-Guards. Yet the squads attacked this centre and killed the hated landlord and his wife. These two had perpetrated untold atrocities on the people. They were the mainstay of this rowdy centre. With this attack all the 100 villages of Huzurnagar zone heaved a sigh of relief'.

'In Nereducherla, we attacked the Home guard centre and killed four of the ring leaders. The rest of the Home guards ran away from the camp and now dare not show their face to the people'.

'In Kondaprolu, a centre with 50 Home guards and a heavy police centre, too, the squads could not directly attack the camp but burnt down the cattle-sheds and water-appliances of the landlords. The small landlords and the rich peasants who were earlier with the enemy came to terms: 'and said allow us to live. We will not do anything against you. We will give away to you all our surplus land over 100 acres. We will pay the wages of agricultural labour as per your demand. But allow us to live, as your comrades do in China'.

'In Adividevulapalli, squads killed two of the hated gangsters in spite of the heavy police camp there. Anantaramulu, the landlord of Malakacherla, who had taken shelter in the above camp and was notorious for his repeated raids on all the surrounding villages was ambushed and finished off'.

'It was in this village that Comrade Rangayya of Ragadapa was killed. People said after his death, 'why do you not wait till the rainy season? Why do you come in summer?' 'An old woman said,' 'I do not know where he was born. He sacrificed his life for us. If we had shown him proper paths and given him information in time, he would not have met this fate'. Another said, 'they have not been lazy in the hills. Whenever necessary, they fight and sacrifice their lives'.

'In Bottalapalem of Miryalgudem zone, the hated landlord, Kondayya, and his agent, Guravayya, were killed by the guerrilla squad. The people were very glad to get rid of this oppressor scum. These were the ones who handed over Comrade Lacchulu, the cell secretary, to the police who shot him dead afterwards. Later, the police beat all the villagers black and blue and shot dead one Saidulu, who was a former militant released from jail. We asked him to come and join the squad or go away somewhere, as otherwise he would be shot by the enemy. Before he could do it, he was caught and shot. The people did not mind the beating as the hated landlord was no more there to inflict on them daily tortures and oppression'.

The people used to say, 'guerrillas carry on their raids in the rainy season and go away in the summer, and the police intensify their raids then. But it is good that you carry on raids because when you do that, the police attacks and raids become less and at longer intervals'.

'The guerrillas had killed Hanumalu of Anjalipuram, who was responsible for the capture and death of Comrade S. B. Punnayya, and Patel Narasayya and Gaddam Veerayya of Kandibanda, *goonda* agents of the landlord oppressor Kandibada Janaki Ramarao. In Kapugallu, the hated landlord oppressor, Muthavarapu Narasayya, got our centre organiser Muttavarapu Venkayya shot dead. The guerrilla squad went for him but he was not found. The squad burnt his cattle-sheds'.

'In Nidigallu (Devarkonda), landlord Chirra Venkata Reddy's 300 cattle were driven away into the forests by the guerrillas. With police help he searched the whole forest area and recovered them except 10 cows, worth Rs. 2,000. Fearing further raids on his cattle, he disposed of a large number of them at cheap prices. It was he who was instrumental for the police surrounding Comrade Vallabhineni Seetaramayya and his squad and for the death of Seetaramayya and another squad member in that action'.

'Similarly, the guerrillas destroyed the properties and gardens, et cetera., of other landlords. The landlords sought terms for compromise. The guerrillas imposed abolition of accumulated debts, returning of *anyakrantulu* (illegally seized lands) to the peasants; fair wages for farm servants; and payment of levies on their properties for the expenses of the guerrillas'.

'These and many other actions against the landlords and police informers enabled us to establish links with the villages and prevent any information reaching the police and the military camps. The result was that in spite of heavy concentration in these zones during the summer of 1950, in spite of additional reinforcements of 600 Gurkhas, the police could not get at our centre. But for these actions, the Home guards and the landlords would have given information about our cadre and we would have suffered irreparable losses'.

'The biggest achievement after these raids was that the people in almost all the villages in the whole of Huzurnagar zone won back the possession of lands which the people had occupied during the *Razakar* period. Only in Kapugallu, Yerravaram, Dirsancherla and Mattampalli were the landlords, with the help of the police in the camps, able to seize these lands from the people'.

(This was the general feature in all our old fighting areas. The peasants stuck to the distributed land. He would, if forced, pay certain portion of the crop as rent but he would not give up possession of the land. Only where the police camps were in considerable strength and the biggest landlords were residing, they could seize back the land and get it cultivated by employing farm servants. Small landlords dared not dispossess the peasant. They wanted their rents to be paid to them and were prepared to allow possession to be in the hands of the peasants).

In Miryalgudem zone, into which the Vadapalli zone was also amalgamated in the beginning of 1950, in the villages of Chidella, 160 acres of lands were distributed to 32 families and they cultivated the land. People were determined to safeguard the crop from falling into the enemy's hands. In Nandigam village, 330 acres of the land of the landlords and of the Government were occupied by the villagers and were being cultivated. In this zone, because of lack of rains, the land distribution could not be carried on extensively.'

'The cultivation of the land by two big landlords, Ramanuja-reddi and Damodarareddi, was stopped in Chelamareddigudem, Surepalli and Vengannagudem. Similarly, the land of G. Kistayya in Nilayagudem, of Vallabhareddi in Ragadapa and of Saidayya of Appalammagudem were laid waste. This was the fate of the lands which the big landlords seized from the peasantry and tried to cultivate with their own farm servants'.

'In the Huzurnagar zone, in the villages of Ganeshpadu, Ravipadu, Sunyapadu, Burugadda, Kitavarigudem, Cherla, Chilukur, and Narayanapuram, *poramboke* (waste land) was cleared and the land was being cultivated by the peasants. In Madhanenigudem agricultural labourers were cultivating 10 acres of the land of a landlord'.

'Another big gain of our actions was the increased morale of the people and demoralisation in the enemy camp'.

'In Somisettipalem, the people who were forced to keep watch, recognised the subedar of the Rajaram camp who had gone there in disguise to make a check-up. They pounced upon him as a new-comer and gave him a good thrashing saying: 'a Communist has come'. The policemen rushed and rescued him. In Yellapuram village, the people on night watch caught hold of a police inspector of Alwala and gave him a good thrashing shouting, 'Adireddi (the famous squad leader) has come. The Appallammagudem enemy Saidayya came with a police party to check the watch. People pounced on him and were about to belabour him when the police intervened. The police cursed the people: 'When the Communists come, you welcome them, feed them and escort them. When we come, you abuse us to your heart's content; this night watch is no use'.

'Police went to burn the Bhattuvenganna Bavithanda from which they had forcibly evacuated people earlier. Lambadi women, 20 in number, were there to have a last glimpse of their huts. The police tried to rape them. Just at that time, two squad members approached the thanda. The women signalled them off. The police saw them, too, and opened fire. The squad members escaped. The police dared not touch the women afterwards as they were forced to keep a constant vigil lest the squad would attack them at any time'.

'Later the centre organiser went and met the women. They narrated the story of the police efforts to rape them and how they were saved by the accidental appearance of two squad members. But they were indignant that the squad members did not attack the police then and there and kill them. They asked our comrades to stay for the day as an old woman wanted to see them before she died'.

'The next day, she came and said, 'I want to ask a question. Do not get angry, my son (Telugu word is *nayina*, a term of endearment and respect, though literally it means father). Why don't you kill the police? We lost our houses and huts. They were burnt. There is no food. We want to fight and destroy the enemy. If you do not attack the police, it is of no use. I want to die after hearing your reply to my question as to whether you are going to kill the police or not'. All the women supported her demand. Our organiser explained to them: 'We will certainly kill the police. We are organising our forces for this. We will see that this whole area is cleared off the police. You must also join us'.

'On another occasion, some women met us and demanded by saying, 'You attack the Pusalapadu camp. Otherwise, do not come to our village. Kill two Home guards at least. Why do you not attack even when the police are moving only in groups of 4 and 5?'

'On another occasion, another lambadi woman said, 'Take a weapon and go and kill that Ramireddy. It does not matter if you have to die. The *Sangham* will continue to flourish. Every year we will celebrate your *ursu* (festival).

'The people's insistent demand is to kill the police and the biggest landlords who are taking shelter in the camps. Without wiping them out, there will be no end to our miseries.'

At Last, Our Party Has Come

'A new upsurge is sweeping the whole taluka. The people are showing their determination and getting ready to save their crops, confiscate the enemy's crops, and for similar militant actions. After hearing about the intensification of the guerrilla offensive, people are saying, 'There is no need for fear anymore. Again, our *rajyam* (rule) will come. The day of death of the enemy is not far off'. In the Ramadugu area, after the guerrilla actions on the enemy, people are heard saying, 'at last our Party has come'. They used to send us repeated messages, 'come and finish off the enemy, otherwise the *mangal-sootrams* of our women will be snatched away and we will be reduced to lead a life of misery. Give us a programme, we will carry it out on our own, you just guide and help'. This was clear proof of the preparedness of the people to take our Party's programme and discharge their role in the struggle and of their wait for the Party's call'.

'In Devarkonda area, the Chenchu people (a hill tribe) met some of our comrades and said, 'You have come twice previously to our aid and you have lost Comrade Seetharamayya who worked for us and died ... All these days, you were not found. You have come now at last'.

'The people and lambadi peasants, who were fed up with police raids and were awaiting the guerrilla squads, were telling great stories regarding our actions, which showed their confidence in us and their discontent as well. For example, one such story went like this: 'The Communist king called all the squads and

said: "You fellows, you are sitting and eating while Nehru's armies are committing so many atrocities on the people? Now you go and deal with them, there is no other way out'. So, the squads have now come again. How they were anxious to see the enemy liquidated could be seen from the following innocent suggestions: 'We send information to you about police camps and your come and raid these small and small camps—all this takes much time. If you go and attack the Huzurnagar town camp itself, these small camps will flee away, without our attacks them.'

'Another report of a conversation that took place'. One said, 'The squads have gone somewhere, a long long way. There are no actions now. The police are not dying'. Only our people are dying. Another tried to soothe him and give him courage: 'Squads will return after rains and when crops grow high'.

'We will fight on the levy issue',—this had become a general slogan, but 'Save your produce, face bullets',—this was the slogan given in our leaflet which gripped the masses. People are getting prepared to resist on the lines suggested in that leaflet. They are removing their grains to safer places. The announcement of the Government that one seer per day per each will be retained with the peasant and the rest will be taken away is terribly hated by the people. 'You brought back all those methods of the Nizam, the son of a bitch. We will rather die than part with our grains'—this was the reply of the people of Chilkur. The people of Kapugallu said, 'whether we do anything or not, the landlords and the military beat us day in and day out. How long have we to suffer like this? Whatever may happen, we should settle accounts with the enemy. Let us see how many people they will kill'. Thus, wherever we go, there is discontent, anger and a tendency to retaliate. All these indicate that people are ready to take up the programme of the Party. After actions by the guerrilla squads, police repression followed. People, though victims of brutal beatings, express their joy at the destruction of their enemies.'

November Day and Peace Day

'November Day and the Peace Day were jointly celebrated throughout the whole area. Hoisting of red flags, group meetings and public meetings and demonstrations, wherever possible, were held. In this connection, achievements of the Soviet Union were widely propagated which the people heard with rapt attention'.

'In all important centres of the Miryalagudem town, red flags were hoisted. On the outskirts of the town, a red flag was hoisted on top of a high factory and the factory gate was burnt down. Early morning brought with it this news and people were taken by surprise. Especially this had special significance as it was carried out in face of the 400 Gurkha soldiers stationed in the heart of the town. Warning posters were also pasted on walls. The enemies were shaking with fear and began moving to the centre of the town from the outskirts, which they thought would be much safer. Some even fled to the Nalgonda town, the district headquarter (as if it was safer there).'

'Wall-posters were put up in Huzurnagar town, too. A warning poster was pasted right on the walls of the sub inspector's house. The story goes round that he was bed-ridden with fever and was in the house.'

'The militancy and interest displayed by the people during these celebrations were remarkable.'

Situation in the Plains of Nalgonda–Around the Military Centre at the End of 1950

'In Palvela, indications were that the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants were on the move. The farm servants were vigorously resisting the old scales of wages.'

'In a village the farm servants of a *zamindar*, Ipparthi Narsireddi, put up a notice in the yard of the *zamindar*. The notice read: 'Hereafter do not force servants to work more than 8 hours a day. Pay their wages properly. Otherwise, beware, the Communists will give it to you'. And, it worked.

'Likewise, the farm servants of the other villages, too, were anxiously awaiting for the Communists. On the whole, they got higher wages than before. But it was not enough to meet the prevalent cost of living'.

'The tenants were refusing to give up their tenancy on the land. The *zamindars* were trying to remove the tenants and sell away the lands. But, the tenants were stubbornly resisting. The rich, middle, poor, all together were uniting against the *zamindar*. The youth was coming forward to join the squads and express the desire to finish off the landlords.'

'Formerly, the landlords used to grab half of the produce from the tenants (in the name of *batai)*. Now, after the advent of the Congress raj, they not only take away half of the produce, but also half of the hay (which formerly used to go wholly to the tenant). This increased plundering was only producing severe discontent in the whole people. They daily experienced the system of robbery and misery which only increased under the Congress raj. The rich peasant was no exception and he, too, suffered. And this was making him openly express discontent against the Congress regime. The people saw through the humbug of the Congress tenant legislation and they, too, expressed their hatred of all this: "This is the joint handiwork of those who swallow the lamb and those who swallow the buffalo'. The people strongly believed that the ultimate victory was theirs and were confident. The rich peasant, too, had started giving shelter to us. From the general position, it could be said that in the event of agricultural labourer struggles, the rich peasant would stand neutral, but would not come in opposition to the struggle.'

'Once again, things started moving in the plains—after a considerable lapse of time, a period when the most ferocious repression was clamped on the people, when the entire area was littered with the military and police camps, when the movement and the organisation suffered a big setback and when links with the people were cut.'

'Once again, after this long lapse of time, people began be coming much more strong, much more determined, much more mature. Once again, guerrilla activities were taking place steadily and confidently. Once again, the military and the police were being sniped at, attacked, teased, and were becoming panicky and jittery. Once again, the landlords were worried, spending sleepless nights'.

'As soon as the contacts were restored with village Chittalur, the people went into the lands of the *zamindar* and gathered about three candies (a candy=1000 kg) of bajra crop. Once again, they seized the lands of the landlords and of the Government.'

'Contacts were established once again with 20 villages, in the neighbourhood of Nakrekallu. Chittalur, Nakarikallu, et cetera, that were the strong bases, where the movement reached a very high level before the setback.'

'People were anxiously awaiting the return of the comrades and the squads. They were anxious to get back their lands. Only they suggested and desired that first the landlord be finished, be driven out. They feared and said so, that as long as he continued to live, things would not be all right. They said that they were not afraid of the military; the military could be 'managed', hide-and-seek could be played with them. Only, the landlord must be finished and the Party cadre must be with them to lead and guide. They assured with all confidence: We can protect the party comrades. Just one will do. Let one comrade remain with us and we will do the rest. We will carry on the raids in the nights. They were coming forth with helpful suggestions, in the matter of tactics, too.'

'Thus, the picture of the plains was changing. The dark days of isolation were coming to an end. Once again, the people were coming into their own.'

Amarabad Area–New Extention on River Krishna Border

It was towards the end of January 1950 that a guerrilla squad and two political squads were sent to Amarabad forest to extend the movement. By the end of June, these squads spread the movement and the whole of Amarabad area was linked with our old movement in Kolhapur taluka of Mahboobnagar district, i.e., extending to a distance of 100 miles.

Amarabad of Mahboobnagar was the taluka adjacent to Devarkonda. During the Razakar-Nizam regime, the guerrilla squads tried to penetrate into the Devarkonda forests and even proceeded to Amarabad villages. But immediately after the Indian army's intervention, the Party lost two of its best organisers and squad leaders, Comrades Seetharamayya and Alwala Narasimha Reddi. Later, with the 'no armed struggle' line, no efforts were made to spread this movement into this important forest stronghold. Yet because of the general influence of the Telangana struggle and also because of the Party's earlier efforts, the people were anxiously awaiting our arrival, to rise against the hated oppressors. Comrade Alwala Narasimhareddi who had lost his life in their cause had become their legendary hero. In every village, people talk of him first and then narrate their woes.

In the beginning of January 1950, the squads from Miryalagudem zone penetrated into Devarkonda village and distributed the grains of the landlords of Neredagomma and killed two hated oppressors in Chitirala and Akaram. They organised and led the agricultural labourer strikes in Ippalapalli and Udimilla successfully. After this, these squads went back. Taking advantage of the absence of the squads and organisers, the remaining landlords got 65 persons arrested in these villages.

Our squads marched in at the end of January 1950. They led processions and held meetings in Maredu, Meddimadugu, Lakshmapuram, Tapalapuram, Madinenipalli, Lingadonipalle and Uppunutula. We distributed the foodgrains of the landlords of these villages to the people, killed two guards who were oppressing the people. In Ippalapalli and Udimalla, agricultural labourers asserted themselves and procured 8 seers per day as wages as against two seers before.

The landlords, even at a distance of 50 miles from the village where the squads began their activities, fled from the villages and sought safety in the towns with the police and military camps.

The enemy got frightened. He wanted to prevent the Party from getting entrenched in the forest region. He organised his camps in almost all the main villages in the forest, and started intensive military combing. He began to shoot people indiscriminately to terrorise them and to stop them from helping and joining the squads. The police and military shot dead one in Villapuram, two in Ainolu, two in Bommanapalli, three in Chintakuntla, two in Mannanur, two in Gangireddipalii, one in Boggula-done, two in Rangapuram and eight in Vaddipatla, a total of 23 persons. In Uppalapalli a washerman was shot dead because once long before he had taken food to the guerillas. In Regulapuram, the police sent word for the Chenchus to come to the camp. They suspected some foul play and sent only two as their spokesmen. One of them was tortured to reveal the whereabouts of the squads. He did not squeal and was shot dead. The second was also put against the tree with the gun aimed at him. But he was let off with a warning to go and find out the whereabouts of the Communists. He came straight and joined the squad.

With these brutal murders, the people were afraid but at the same time, their hatred against the police and the military grew and was greater than their fear of them. They asked the squads again and again to ambush the police and shoot them dead. They helped them to find out the best places for laying ambushes for the police.

The people who were forced to keep night watch by the enemy helped the guerrillas the moment they approached them. It was they who took the guerrilla squads with them on night *gasti* (watch patrol) to attack the police camp at Chintakuntla. The Medepalli Patel, who was the agent of the 4000-acre landlord Raji Reddi of the same village, was pointed out by the villagers while he was sleeping camouflaged among the night watchers. They insisted that he be shot on the spot and the squad carried out their demand.

The landlords monopolised the land owning hundreds and in some cases

thousands of acres of the best land. The wages they paid to the agricultural labourer were not more than 1.5 to 2 seers of jowar per day. Farm servants were fed at the landlords' houses and given a pittance of Rs. 50 per annum, with which they were expected to maintain their wives and children, and dependents. Usury was rampant, making the agricultural labourers bond-slaves of the landlords. In these forest regions, the landlords owned herds of cows and bullocks. They paid 300 seers of jowar and Rs. 50 per annum for a herdsman to look after 60 to 100 head of cattle. The landlord yearly used to sell cattle worth Rs. 1,500 from these herds of 60 to 100 cattle. This was the miserable condition of the people in these areas.

On March 10, 1951, in Konnagula, grain was distributed. The food situation was bad—1.5 seers of bajra or jowar per rupee. The chenchu tribal people used to mix tamarind with ashes and used to drink it to appease their hunger. A hundred and eighty bags of grain of the village landlords were seized and distributed among 1,000 chenchus. The debt deeds were all burnt. The next day 80 policemen in lorries raided the village and tried to forcibly seize the grain of the peasants, but the men and women resisted. A severe lathi-charge was made. The heads of men and breasts of women were the targets of the police brutes. The people did not flinch. The police could seize only 25 bags of grain with great difficulty. This resistance became the talk of the whole area.

The guerrillas retaliated after a few days on the Konnagula police camp and kept the police confined to the camp while destroying the properties of the landlords, of those who helped the police in that raid.

- Madinenipalli and Vongaronipalli: 7 muzzle-loaders and 2 shot-guns were captured. Home Guards were forced to disperse. This was in September and October 1950.
- In November and December, Bommanapalli and Lakshmipuram were raided. The Home Guard organisation was dissolved. Seven muzzle-loaders were seized.

  After this, all arms from Home Guards were taken away by the police.
- Balumur, where landlords owning more than 400 acres of land each dominate, the squad raided the village, seized one shot-gun and three *barmars* (muzzle-loaders). Six other landlords who had shot-guns and muzzle-loaders escaped. The squad destroyed their houses. The squad warned the landlords not to compel the people to do night watch and also pay a minimum of four seers of jowar or bajra as daily wages. On March 21, 1951, 300 bags of grain were seized by 300 chenchu tribal people.
- Tirumalapuram (Acchampeta or Amarabad taluka): The Home Guard and police camp was raided by guerrillas on March 9, 1951. The sentry was fired upon and wounded. Hayricks and properties of Home Guard leaders were burnt down. The police dared not engage the guerrillas. It was only half-an-hour after the guerrillas withdrew that they started firing back, and kept up their firing for a long time.

It was in this area that the guerrilla squads successfully raided the Kottapalli police station and seized rifles and ammunition. Based on this area, the Telangana guerrilla squads established contacts with the people and the Party on the southern side of the River Krishna, with Guntur and Kurnool districts, and made the whole Nallamala forest region their guerrilla base.

In all these areas, the impact of the Telangana people's armed struggle was enormous. Though the guerrilla squads and organisers had not reached these areas till 1950, the landlords and *patels* and *patwaris*, afraid of people's revolt, lessened their oppression and had to give up their practice of forced labour, as in Nalgonda and Warangal.

The people realised that the *Sangham* was theirs and it fought for them. They were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the squads and so, when they arrived, received them with open arms and with great enthusiasm and happiness.

The biggest problems that faced the guerrillas were 'the lack of sufficient ammunition', and of educating the militants and developing a strong party organisation to canalise and lead all this mass upsurge.

The people were on the move. The Government and police officials knew this and said, 'The moment the police turn their back, the Sangham rules these villages'.

Kurnool District

The squads were sent to Kurnool district in December 1960 to extend the movement. They attacked the forest guards (*chowkidars*) and Home Guards in that area. In the Siddeshwaram village, the squads snatched 7 shot-guns and 4 muzzle-loaders from the Home Guards and the landlords. In raids on forest guards at Sivapuram, Kottapalli, Indreswaram and Guwalakunta, five more shot-guns were seized. One forest guard who was a very notorious oppressor was killed and others were driven out of the forest. People were now free to enjoy the forest produce without bribing and being harassed by the forest officials. People on their own attacked and burnt down the forest offices in Rudrakodu, and Appirajukunta. Whenever they contacted the squads, they used to narrate their woes listen to their advice and go back with new found happiness and determination.

The food situation was quite bad. The Government, afraid of the guerrilla movement spreading, exempted the area from grain levy. But the landlords having monopoly of land and grain raised the prices to one rupee per seer of rice. The people asked the Party: 'You have provided fuel to the stove below but provide grain also for the pot above' (*'Poyyikrindaki yerpatu chesaru, poyyimediki kuda yerpatu cheyyandi.'*)

Seeing the misery and the urge of the people, the squads took up the distribution of grain. In Kottapalli village, 200 bags taken from a, Padigala Subbayya, and in Guvvalakunta, 50 bags of paddy of another merchant were

distributed. Police raids and beatings of the people continued. But people said that it did not matter: 'They beat a few and keep a few in jail for a few days. But we get food. So, distribute the grain of the landlords'. This had become the common talk.

The Government brought three arrested persons and shot them dead as Communists in Indreshwaram and declared them to be killed in a clash. They kept three muzzle-loaders along with the dead bodies. They brought a large number of people from the neighbouring villages to see the dead bodies, to frighten the people telling them that if they sided with the Communists, they would meet the similar fate. Two of them were ordinary Chenchu people and one was a political prisoner from some other district. The people were not taken in by this, they started hating the Government more.

Vikarabad Area

This area now corresponds to the western talukas of the present day Hyderabad district, consisting of Vikarabad, Tandur and other talukas, bordering the Karnataka area. The movement and contacts extended to about 300 square miles. It was 50 miles to the west of the Hyderabad city. The movement extended to this area only towards the end of 1950.

As in all new areas, the guerrilla squads sent here also started propaganda against the levy of grain and against taxes to the Government. The squads warned the village *patels* and *patwaris* not to collect any government taxes; the fruits of different kinds of trees and groves in the fields of the peasants should be freely enjoyed by the peasants, without paying anything to the Government or to the landlords; for agricultural labourers, daily wage rates should be four seers and for farm servants it must be 80 seers per month instead of 40 seers. The propaganda was carried on that the tenants (peasants) need not pay any rent (lease amounts) to the big landlords and zamindars, as it was the peasants who really worked and raised the crops, and as such the land and its produce belonged to the peasant. Agitation against seizing from the landlords *anyakrantalu* (illegally seized lands) and for not paying the usuriously accumulated loans was carried on. The peasants and agricultural labourer said, 'All that you say is good. But if we do it, the landlords and the police will kill us'. The squads asked them to stand together and fight, and then they would succeed in beating off their offensive.

Because of this agitation and propaganda, the poor people started discussions everywhere and they started looking forward eagerly for the squad and the organisers to reach their villages and help them to achieve these demands.

The food situation was also very acute and serious. Only four or five rich people in each village had enough foodgrain that would last them the whole year, the middle peasant had foodgrain for about four months. The poor and the labourers were already facing starvation. They usually lived for 3 to 4 months on tamarind seeds or gruel made from very coarse grains or seeds of grass and leaves.

Because of the squad's presence and agitation and certain actions, the *patels* and *patwaris* stopped collecting the taxes and the levy; the landlords and their clerks and servants stopped coming to the villages to collect rents or debts. *Vetti* (*begar*) and illegal exactions were also stopped. These old practices continued only in the villages where the police camps were situated or close by to them and that, too, on a far reduced scale. Agricultural labour got their wages increased to Rs. 20 to 25 per month. Cattle of the poor peasants grazed free on Government grass lands. People said, 'the cattle have got their fill, but what about us?'

The landlords brought the police and started terrorising the villages. Chintapalli Ramchandra Reddy and police shot dead a potter near Ayyavarigudem. Harijan Ellayya of Chintapalli, Harijan Lalayya of Chillapuram, two peasants in Ellori Tanda, a cowherd in Tatiparti, and two youths in Vikarabad were shot dead by the police. Police raided on a big scale in Vikarabad villages, Tirumalipeta, Mallaparam, Tumartipalle, and beat more than 200 persons, raped more than a score of women. Six women died as the were raped.

The people with the help of the squad thrashed some of the landlords and their agents who were responsible for these raids. They destroyed the village officers' records in some villages. The squads waylaid police couriers in the Chincholi taluka and seized the *tapals*. They also seized guns from the home guards in the border villages of Bidar taluka. They raided outposts in Lakshmansagram, Vontaram, Samanakurti, Naskallu, and on the houses of the landlords in Chittampalli, Minarpalli and Malkapuram. They raided the railway station in Rukmapuram and destroyed the records.

Comrade T. Lakshmana Murthy from the Torruru village, Ramchandrapuram taluka, East Godavari district in coastal Andhra, a young educated cadre, who was deputed to work and help the movement here, was caught by the police, tortured and shot dead, practically on the eve of the withdrawal of the movement.

Position at the Time of Withdrawal of Telangana Struggle (October 1951)

At the time of the withdrawal of the armed struggle in the Conference of the Party Cadre of Amarabad region, November end 1951, the summing up of the movement for the whole period and the situation that existed at that time was reported as follows:

In this region of Huzurnagar full times Miryalgudem and Devarkonda talukas, there were 200 and 540 militants in the squads. Regular contacts existed in 300 villages and in another 300 villages squads went and came. A hundred weapons were seized during this period. Later the movement was extended to the Amarabad forest area upto Mahboobnagar all along the Krishna River. Squads drove away forest guards, and the Chenchu tribals had free use of all forest produce and there was no oppression, no forced labour. They seized the landlords' grain in

neighbouring villages. Vinoba Bhave's bhoodan diversion did not cut ice with the Telugu peasantry in the fighting areas.

The backbone of feudal oppression and exploitation was broken. Forced labour was abolished. Village committees conducted village affairs. Union armies tried to bring back the old order. But people resisted. Wherever the landlords reoccupied the lands, they could cultivate them only with the help of the police camps. In other places they had to leave it again. The peasants retained their position on *anyakrantalu* land restored to them, fighting bitterly as in the case of Kummari Muttayya. Agricultural labour strikes were successful for an increase in the wages in a large number of villages. The Government did not stop people from occupying forest and waste lands.

Though the village panch committees were not functioning as in the 'pre-police action' days, people were settling their disputes through the mediation of individuals belonging to these old panch committees and abiding by their verdict. Where they could not solve any problem they kept them pending till the arrival of or for contacting the party organiser of the area. Even the rich peasants brought their problems and disputes for solution and verdict before the Party and *Sangham* organisers. The people were not going to the courts or to the Congress.

Agricultural workers had always readily responded to the call for struggle for their demands wherever and whenever the Party could reach them.

According to the details received by them from a few villages of Huzurnagar taluka, out of 4167 acres of land, 2770 acres were in the hands of the people. The landlords could reoccupy only 140 acres.

The Dacharam landlord tried to seize back 1100 acres (*khas* self-cultivated *seri* lands and *anyakrantalu)* but could not succeed fully. He was forced to leave them and be content with collecting Rs. 5 to 10 per acre as rent. Peasants during this period occupied and cultivated nearly 2,000 acres of new forest and waste lands.

The people were unable to retain the *seri* lands (surplus land) of the big landlords that had been distributed, but were able to retain, to quite an extent *anyakrantalu* waste lands and leased lands. The Party was able to restrain the peasantry from occupying their lost lands (*anyakrantalu*) if they were in the possession of the middle and rich peasants and presuade them to reach agreements with them, while helping them to seize back all the lands that were in the hands of the landlords.

In Adividevulupalli of Miryalagudem taluka, out of 1200 acres of waste lands the Government gave *pattas* on 40 per cent of them. From the reports received from 33 villages (out of 67 villages with which the Party had links and 100 villages with which the Party and the guerrillas could not maintain contact) of Miryalagudem taluka, the people were in possession and were cultivating all the waste lands distributed and all the leased lands 50 per cent of *anyakrantalu* lands

(the lands illegally seized by the landlords but restored to the rightful peasant owners) and 20–30 per cent of surplus lands that had been distributed.

Bhuvanagiri taluka: Out of 320 villages in this taluka, 180 were *jagir* and 140 *khalsa* (Government). In the *jagir* village even the tamarind tree in one's courtyard was the property of the *jagirdar* and the householder had to buy the usufruct of the tree in auction. Craftsmen and artisans had to do *begar* (forced labour) to the *jagirdar* in the cities. There used to be many kinds of taxes and illegal exactions. All these were completely stopped by our movement. The *jagirdars* dared not enter the villages. The Puligalla *Jagirdar's* 6,000 acres were still in the hands of the peasants and they were not paying any nazarana or lease amount. The lands distributed in Sunshala, Veluvarti, Kisarapalli and Siddapuram to the extent of 1200 acres, and 400 acres of Varakantam Gopalreddi in Malkapuram were still in the possession of the peasants, in spite of the Government's attacks, raids and tortures; auctioning of grazing lands was stopped and people were grazing their cattle for free. The people did not surrender *anyakrantalu* and leased lands but were cultivating them themselves.

In this taluka, there were 45 organisers and 450 squad members before the Indian army entered, but after their first raids, only 10 organisers were left alive of those who were not imprisoned. By the time the Telangana struggle was called off, the number of party organisers and active members increased to 70 and militants to 300 in 140 villages.

Bagatu (area which comprised Shirkey, Palvela, and Ibrahim-patnam): A major portion of *anyakrantalu* and waste lands were still in the hands of the peasants. New forest and other waste lands had been occupied to the extent of more than 2,000 acres. In this area, there were 47 party members and 423 militants in the squads at village level. The Party was in touch with 265 villages.

In the new extended area of Kalvakurti-Nagarkurnool-Kolhapur talukas of Mahbubnagar district, peasants forced landlords to take only one-third as the produce as rent as against half earlier, and they successfully resisted evictions in a large number of villages. .Agricultural workers in a number of villages, about 40, got their wage increased from Rs. 150 to Rs. 250. The Party was in regular touch with 90 villages, with 196 militants and party members.

4

The Godavari Forest Region

Khammam Kothagudem (Palvancha) Area after 'Police Action'

At first, the leadership in this area was for withdrawal of the armed struggle. Later on, with the Party's decision to continue it, as well as because of the manhunt that was launched by the Indian military authorities, and the landlords who had returned, they had to take up the struggle. With the butchery of leading comrades like Comrades Maccha Veerayya, Gangavarapu Sreenivas Rao, the arrest of Manchikanti Ramakrishna Rao and others, the squads and the remaining cadre were forced to retreat to the forest areas.

The attacks and raids were so intense that there were 160 raids on one village, within three months. One militant was beaten 18 times till his body was a sore wound, for months. One squad was repeatedly attacked by the police and the military 12 times within a day. It had to be continuously on the run from early morning till 8 p. m., running more than 120 kms. Encirclement and combing raids covering 30 to 40 villages and involving 1,000–1,500 armed personnel took place.

The immensity of police and military concentration and the nature of police patrolling can be understood from the fact that in the Proddutur area consisting of 30 villages, there were 21 camps, with 15 persons in each. In each one of these villages in Proddutur, 20 to 30 persons were beaten to pulp and made invalids. In the four talukas of this area, 100 camps were established with an estimated 7,000 personnel.

In these raids and later up to the end of 1951, 31 fulltime workers of the Party were caught, including four zonal committee members and five centre organisers, and were shot dead. Another 46 Party members were arrested and killed. Not even 5 per cent of the Party members surrendered to the enemy in spite of all his terror. Couriers and others were tortured terribly, but the enemy could get only four to squeal a few secrets.

After these raids of 1948 and early 1949, only two big squads of 25–30 members and 2 small squads in the plain areas and four organisers were left functioning in the whole area.

The Party had to reorganise its whole organisation. It formed groups of 3

in the plain areas, and in the forest area, squads of 5 were organised. With patient and steady work, it was able to reforge links with most of the villages and extend to the whole of the forest area, Palvancha and East Illendu and the whole of Madhira taluka, to another 200 villages more compared to a period before the police action.

During June - December, 1949, in about 150 villages throughout this area, agricultural labourers ran a movement on a large scale for getting their wages increased. Twenty thousand agricultural labourers participated in these struggles and got their wages doubled, and in certain cases even trebled. In some places, washermen conducted their strikes and got increased emoluments. Eight thousand bags of paddy and other foodgrains were seized and most of them distributed among the people.

With this revival and spread of the movement, and with the reorganisation of the structure of the Party and the mass contacts, the Party was able to recruit 400 new persons, 90 per cent of them from agricultural labourers and poor peasants from about 100 villages. Among them, 6 Party groups of women were also formed. Between the area leadership and the village, the Party had organised 7 Zonal Committees of Palvancha, Wyra, Vemsur, Proddutur, Paleru, Madhira and Illendu.

The links with the mining areas of Kothagudem had got broken again and again, first with the arrest of Comrade Parsa Satyanarayana and, later, with the shooting of Comrade Anandarao and the arrest of 40 militants.

To protect themselves, the guerrillas had to organise immediate cleaning up of police informers and agents from the villages especially those landlords who were in the forefront. The squad members took secret shelters in villages themselves, in spite of large numbers of the military and the police camps, and destroyed 60 village landlords and their agents including Rapalle Anantaramayya, Kommineni Prakasa Rao and Ummineni Ramayya, the most notorious of them. The squad and Party members levied contributions from the landlords and collected large amounts for feeding the cadres and guerrillas and for carrying on the struggle.

A large number of attacks on the military and police patrols to harass them and restrict their raids were organised in the form of ambushes (about 40 in number), or surprise sniping attacks. About 40 military and police personnel were killed and another 50–60 were wounded. Attacks on camps were far fewer. Because of these actions, the enemy could not organise home guards in most parts of the area. He could do this only in 30 villages. People used to hide and feed the guerrillas and the cadre in their houses even when the military was raiding the same villages.

In the beginning the cruel character of the enemy was not fully realised, and so most of the fulltimers became victims of betrayal by the village landlords. In was a costly mistake not to have purged vacillating elements in time. Since the area was also small, the enemy was able to concentrate and inflict heavy losses.

Palvancha (Kothagudem) Forest Area

Even during the *Razakar* days, the base of operations had been the Godavari forest area. This had become the main base after the Indian Union army intervention. In the later days, the Party and the squads extended beyond River Godavari to the Bhadrachalam area, a part of old Seetharamaraju's Koya revolt area.

The Government concentrated its efforts to evacuate us from the forest areas. It adopted the Briggs plan of evacuating the koya tribal people to the outskirts of forests. For this, it burned down their hamlets and resorted to mass beatings and mass murders. In the Banzara village of Soyam Ganguly, a small hamlet of 10–15 huts, between 15–20 people were shot dead.

In the Gadepadu camp alone, 1,500 koya people died of cholera within 2 months. In the whole area about 10,000 koya people died of cholera, another 300 were shot or murdered by the police, military and landlord *goondas*. In that camp, 18 Party members died of cholera.

In the Allapalli camp, in Palvancha, 45 were shot in one day. Among them were 18 Party members who were killed after two or three days of torture. In this camp, 119 were murdered in four days. Some were shot dead, some burnt alive.

Aerial reconnaissance was resorted to and bombs were also dropped two or three times.

Rape of women by the police and the military was quite common, especially where the military and the police camps were situated. Children were brutally killed before the very eyes of their mothers. In a number of villages, people defended their womenfolk against this atrocity. The guerrilla squads and village Party members, especially from among the Koya people, were butchered by the enemy on a large scale.

In Nereda, which was one of the strongest villages of the movement, the D. S. P., Sreenivas, and Vellodi, the Special Administrator, threatened that the whole village would be burnt. Once 70 women were beaten with tamarind birches. They were forced to wear pyjamas and chameleons were put into these Pyjamas and at the bottom the pyjamas were tucked up. The reptiles started biting and the agony of the women was indescribable. Red chilli powder was also sprinkled on the wounds. For five months they were ill. Another day, they did not allow mothers to give their babies breast feed and all the children were crying for milk.

Yet, the people were not cowed down.

It was in this village that a squad leader was once surrounded. The women promptly dressed him up like a girl who had just reached puberty, kept 'her' in a corner of the room to be seen and after the police and military left, escorted him to a safe place.

Similarly, in the village of Bendalapadu, a peasant woman, Rajamma, was

caught. She and her husband were tortured. With red-hot iron rods, her waist and hands were branded as if she was wearing ornaments; but she did not utter a single word about the squads. The charge was that she was taking food to the squads in the forests and that she keeps her devotion to the Party and has worked in all the elections for the party. I had an opportunity to meet her years later. In 1960, I saw this ideal couple, their modesty, and their deep devotion to the Party.

In spite of this terror, links were maintained with the people. We have already noted the sweep of the agricultural labour strikes during 1949 and 1950. During these strikes, the labourers won wages of 160 seers of grains per acre for harvesting, et cetera, as against the earlier 60 seers. In the Illendu and Burgampadu talukas, the annual farm servants won a wage of 12 bags as against the earlier 6 bags. For wood cutting, the rate of Rs. 3 per day was won by 4,000 workers. Regular contact with Kothagudem mine workers was forged. Continuous leafleteering was done. They were a source of immense help for various technical purposes.

The hard core that remained at the end, just before the withdrawal, were 150 Party members and many sympathisers in the plains, and 50 koya Party members and 500 koya militants in the forest area. But this was one area with which the State Centre could not keep any contact for nearly 2 years till the armed struggle was withdrawn. Daily links with the villages got weakened. Continued starvation in the forests reduced all the squad members and leaders to an extremely weak condition, bleeding of gums, et cetera, and they became frequent victims of malarial and other fevers. Questions about the wisdom of conducting the armed struggle became more insistent. It was just at that time, in a surprise raid, that the leadership of the whole area was surrounded by the military and Comrade Giri Prasad was seriously wounded. The rest of the leadership fought back, carried the comrade for miles, and miles and for days and days, nursed his wounds and restored him back to health. Such was the camaraderie that developed fighting a death-defying people's battle.

The leadership heard the radio announcing the decision of withdrawal of armed struggle on October 21, 1951.

Movement in the Godavari Belt among Koya People

By the end of February 1949, after thousands of members of village squads and village panchayats had either been caught, and even those who had resigned and surrendered were thrown behind prison bars by the Military Government, the remaining retreated to the forests while some others reached the towns. Only a few remained in their own areas.

The Party in Suryapet and Manukot talukas as also from certain parts of Khammam and Illendu talukas extended itself to the forest areas of Narsampet, Mulugu of Warangal, Manthena taluka of Karimnagar and Chennur in Adilabad

district, bordering the Godavari River forest area. The Party in Khammam and Madhira talukas extended into the forests of Palvancha and Illendu. The Party organisation in Huzurnagar and Miryalagudem talukas and in the southern parts of Suryapet taluka found its way into the Nallamalai forest areas. The Party machinery in the Nalgonda and Bhongir talukas extended itself into the Rachakonda hillock areas near the Hyderabad City. Karimnagar and Adilabad forests received Party organisers from Jangaon and other talukas.

People in the forest areas of these talukas were far away from the towns and with no communications facilities, they lived their own lives in poverty. Men and women could afford only some scant clothing. Though raising of cattle was their main occupation, they equally depended on agriculture as well as forest produce. Agriculture was shifting cultivation (zoom or *podu* cultivation). Unable to maintain themselves with the produce from agriculture, they used to collect all sorts of wild fruits, ripe and unripe, different varieties of leaves, and used to live on them.

The exploitation of these innocent people was horrifying. landlords of the plains were the village authorities (*patels* and *patwaris*) for these tribal people who collected ten to hundred times more than the land revenue payable to the Government. They secured *pattas* on these lands for themselves, keeping the tribals as temporary occupants. Only to a very small extent, the land was registered as *patta* land in the name of koyas. Forced labour was the order of the day; even the small amounts they earned by hard labour did not reach them.

Forest officials were devils incarnate vis-a-vis these tribal people. They exploited the labour of these people in a thousand and one ways for official and personal work, but did not allow them to collect a few pieces of firewood for cooking purposes or such material required for construction of small huts without collecting heavy bribes. Any tribal seen with an axe in the forest was beaten up; the only way out for these poor people was to somehow pay some bribes to forest officials and manage to exist. The one pretext they always trotted out was that the land under the cultivation of the tribals came within the 'reserve forest areas' and hence tribals should not cultivate those lands, but on the other hand, they were not allowed to till any other new areas. One can imagine the fate and lot of such tribal people. Everything grown in the forests was put to auction by the Government. And the tribal people who were born in these forests and grew up there and had to live there, could get not even a leaf, exept by paying a price to the contractor or the forest guard and officer.

Contractors and *sahukars* paid very low wages to the tribal labourers and amassed huge amounts of wealth, as is seen in the case of the forest contractors. Further, these tribals could manage to secure only very low prices for tamarind or honey, or other agricultural products. In return, the *sahukars* sold them salt, chillies, oil, clothes, and tobacco at fancy prices.

The social set-up among them was equally intolerable. The traditional leader was a dictator and a corrupt person. No one had the right to oppose him. He

took bribes from contractors and sent labourers from under his control on less wages, he was an accomplice of the *sahukars* in the exploitation of the people. For every festival or for every wrong committed, people had to pay *mamools* (bribes) to this traditional leader. The life of women was much worse and wretched.

Any man, desiring to marry a girl came with a crowd of his supporters, and when she was took alone, forcibly hold of her, dragged her away despite her opposition and married her. Neither the girl nor her parents had any say in the matter nor could they intervene. If the traditional leader had already become an accomplice in this affair, by taking bribe, the dispute could not even be raised. The traditional leader would merely say: 'let the bone taken by a dog remain with that dog itself'. And that became the final word. This had been the tribal custom.

It was no easy job for the Party to enter into these tribal areas bound by such antiquated social customs and barriers and tribal traditions. But once the Party found its way, it won the respect and confidence of the tribal people.

In the initial period, they ran away when they saw the squads. All the inhabitants were gathered with great difficulty at a place in each village and were told about the Party and its ideals. Then only they realised that "they are our own people'. Then only they came to a determination to fight those exploiters like *zamindars*, *patels*, *patwaris*, forest officers and the Government. Once they trusted the squads, they themselves took the Party organisers to other villages, introduced them and helped the extension of the Party into these new areas. Before they took the Party organisers to a new village, they used to send word to that village saying that some relatives were being brought over the next day, and, hence, all people should remain in the village and not go out. Party leaders were called 'relatives' or 'our own men'. They shared whatever kind of food they had with the squad members and they enjoyed eating whatever was given to them. They won their confidence and established the Party in those areas.

Once the squads entered the forest areas, *patels*, *patwaris*, and forest officials ran for their lives. The tribal people heaved a sigh of relief; they cultivated new lands; forest contractors paid wages to the labourers as fixed by the Party. Until they conceded such wages, tribal labourers did not go for work. This meant a three to four-fold increase in their wages. Similarly, *sahukars* purchased the forest produce from the tribals at rates fixed by the Party.

An overwhelming majority of the traditional tribal leaders changed their past habits; they, too, wholeheartedly participated in the mass movement; the old type of marriage practices was given up. They, too, confiscated the cattle and land of landlords in their areas and distributed them among the people. They extended these actions to the plain areas as well.

Village squads were constituted with all men and women with a good physique. Some of them came into the regular guerrilla squads and even became Party organisers. As many as two hundred tribal youth came into the Party and joined either as squad members or as organisers or couriers. Special mention has

to be made of the fact that twenty women along with their husbands came into the Party and took up weapons after joining the squads. Not less than one thousand Koya people joined the village squads and village committees. These few figures indicate the extent to which the Party's influence spread among these people.

People with the same economic, and social life, living in Palvancha and Illendu talukas organised themselves under the Palvancha Area Committee. They moved into action on a mass scale and scored many victories. They joined the guerrilla squads in large numbers.

The movement also grew among the Chenchu people in the Nallamalai forests in the Krishna River forest area, and the Gond tribals in Adilabad district. The Communist Party spread into the whole tribal belt in the Telangana area.

Plain areas adjoining these forests were also brought into the fold of the movement. Distribution of landlords' lands, cattle and paddy was undertaken by the people on a large scale. However, extension of the movement in these plains areas was not much due to the increase in the intensity of raids by the police on the squads.

The Party formulated the following economic demands for the immediate improvement of the conditions of the koya people:

a. Do not pay any of the taxes that are being collected by the Government officers, like tax on plough (Rs. 10 per plough); tax for gathering *ippapuvvu* (a flower from which liquor can be brewed—tax per house was Rs. 6); tax on bamboo matting, house-tax, tax for cattle pound; tax for cattle herding place (Rs. 1.50); tax on ovens (8 annas), tax for grazing cattle (12 annas per cattle head); tax and illegal collection for any new hut or house constructed (Rs. 50); stop all illegal exactions in the form of free supply of ghee, honey, poultry, goats, et cetera, to the officials.
b. Do not pay taxes or rents to *banjardars*, the big landlords, who were given the right by the Government to collect taxes on lands in the forest areas.
c. Land must belong to the actual cultivator and no rent needs be paid to the landlord.
d. Seize back all the lands which were taken possession of by the landlords, contractors, by force or by any deceptive means.
e. Do not pay accumulated usurious debts. Demand loans without interest.
f. Do not do *vetti,* i.e., *begar.* Demand wages for any labour or work done for anyone.
g. Inform the people about the actual town prices, in the plains, of the various goods, of both what they have to purchase and of what they sell, so that they may not be cheated.
h. See that the contractor or outside merchants pay proper prices to the tribal people who gather forest produce like honey tamarind, shins, ippapuvvu, mats etc. people should be free to sell to anyone. Compulsory sale only to certain contractors or the Government agents must be done away with.

i. Beedi leaves: The rate for picking and bundling of 100 leaves must be a minimum of one anna and not half an anna. (In 1971, the Congress Government nationalised this and reduced it to 3 to 4 paise, as against the earlier 8 to 10 paise which the people won through a series of strikes during 1968–1970.)

j. The wage rate for wood cutting should be increased.

k. The rate for certain wood or other forest produce should be increased.

Apart from immediate partial economic demands, the general political slogan given was: 'an autonomous Koya area and local self-government'.

The Party had also taken up the health question, treatment of various chronic diseases from which the Koya people were suffering, hygienic conditions of living, social equality, the question of women and education of the people.

Burning of Villages and Organisation of Concentration Camps

The police started setting fire to village after village. Especially in the forest areas, not even a small hut was allowed to remain unrazed. All the belongings of the people including food-grains and clothes were set on fire along with the huts. In the plains areas as well, small huts or any shelter in the fields or near the wells were also burnt and razed to the ground. People in small villages were forced to go and live near big villages. In such centres, big military camps were established. The tribal villagers were moved away from distances of 40 to 50 miles and were asked to live around the military camps on the fringes of forests. The atrocious manner in which these concentration camps were organised could be seen from the fact that the tribal people of one whole taluka were forced to live in just three or four military concentration camps. This was done under the 'Briggs Plan'. Congress leaders called them as rehabilitation camps; in reality, they were concentration camps, expressly intended for the purpose of denying a foothold to guerrilla squads in the forest areas. Hundreds of villages were thus set on fire.

Once they were brought into the concentration camps, the military picked up certain persons pointed out by the *deshmukhs* and their agents and they were beaten up mercilessly, until their skin split, oozing blood. For instance, they picked up eight tribal people from the Gudur military camp in Narsampet taluka, beat them up until their skin split, sprinkled red chilli powder over those wounds, tied up their hands and feet, and threw them in red hot sands just as fresh fish is thrown on sands to be dried. With no food and water, they all died.

Similarly, they beat up a tribal peasant in the Asoknagar military camp in Narsampet taluka and as the skin peeled off and was hanging from his body, hot water was poured on him. The peasant died.

Raping of women before the eyes of their husbands had become a very common crime indulged in by these police and military brutes.

Shooting the people had become another pastime. People of one village were

taken to another village, from one camp to another, from one taluka to another and shot dead there. People were even brought from inside the jails and shot dead. People, Party members and squad members were brought in lorries into the Narsampet, Mulug, Illendu and Palvancha forests and were shot dead en masse as if they shooting sparrows. Many methods were adopted to kill, all with a view to striking terror in the hearts of the people.

Tens of thousands of people who were herded in the concentration camps were not given proper food and were subjected to severe hunger. First beat them up, then make them dig long ditches, ask them to stand near the edge of such pits and shoot them in such a way that they fall down into those very pits and then cover them up with earth. Some were taken to the huge trees just outside the camp, were hanged to death from those trees. Many such methods were adopted in this camp near Nagaram, in Manukot taluka.

Due to continued hunger, many families died. Cholera, small-pox and other contagious diseases became common in these camps and whole camps were affected. It was estimated that more than 10,000 tribal people living in Narsampet, Mulug, Illendu and Palvancha talukas met their death in this fashion. Cattle and sheep, too, perished in large numbers due to the lack of fodder and proper care, in these concentration camps.

It is to be noted that camps set up to perpetrate such inhuman atrocities on the people were styled as Gandhinagar, Asokanagar, Jawaharnagar, Kakatiya-nagar, Bapunagar and so on by the Congress leaders.

With some variations, such was the torture in practically all the areas. All this was done with one and only one aim: to isolate the squads and the Party from the people and then smash them, to force the people to reveal the secrets of the Party.

If people had to travel from one village to another to visit their relatives, they had to take permission chits from the military authorities. Anyone found without such permits were caught by the military, branded as a Communist and imprisoned. Those who took such chits could travel only along the route mentioned in the chit and stay only for the specified days.

It should be noted that a large number of tribal people escaped being dragged to the concentration camps, and found their way into the vast interior of the forests. They and their families lived with such minimum requirements that could be shifted immediately. Their paddy used to be 'dumped' (hidden). Despite the encirclement raids, people young and old, women and children, along with the squads escaped into these areas and lived there till the end, till the withdrawal of the armed struggle.

Life in Forest Areas for Guerrillas and Cadre Hard

The tribal areas produce very little foodgrains. The tribal people live most of the year on grass seeds, forest fruits and nuts, wild roots, and *Ippapuvvu* (a kind

of flower which gives intoxicating liquor). They hunt forest fowl, boar or forest buffalo called *yenumu* in Telugu. When they got coarse millets, like *somalu*, *arikalu*, or even millets, they make it into *roti* or gruel and live on it or on the fermented gruel. Our squads and organisers lived on these meagre foodstuffs, quite like the tribal people, and mingled with them and won their confidence and respect.

With the tightening of the police and military cordon and repeated raids, and especially with the forced evacuation of the whole koya tribal people from the forest belts to starve the guerrillas, it became more and more difficult to feed and sustain the squads.

It had been very difficult for the Government to force evacuation on the koya people. Repeated raids, brutal beatings and rapes and even mass butchery did not succeed. Then the Government resorted to burning down their hamlets. A rough estimate showed that about 1,000 hamlets were burnt. Yet the koya people did not submit. Ultimately, the Government authorities concentrated their efforts to forcibly impounding all the cattle of the koyas and keeping them outside the forest areas. It was this, along with the terror and burning of the hamlets, that forced the koya people to go and stay in the camps. Yet, they tried to find excuses repeatedly to go to the forests, on the grounds of cultivating their fields or collecting forest produce, and even during the short time, they used to get for these purposes, they sought out the squads, and gave them supplies they urgently required.

Once in this forest belt, the squads were reduced to extremes. Then they decided to raid and drive the cattle of some of the hated landlords into the forest, kill them and live on them. They dried the beef with plenty of salt, and each guerrilla was given a limited portion of this dried salted beef, to be used as iron ration in case of an emergency.

But, in the Krishna forest area, for the Chenchus, cows and bulls are sacred. They not only do not eat them, but consider anyone doing it as a sinner and hate him. So our guerrillas had to avoid killing and eating them. Once a newly recruited guerrilla squad in dire extreme did kill a calf and ate it, but it was with great difficulty that the leadership could explain it to the Chenchu people and pacify them. In this area, they had to depend on all kinds of leaves that are edible, and on roots and on small animals that could be trapped. Hunting with guns was prohibited, not only because of the shortage of precious ammunition, but also these forests being small in area, and the military camps being close to the guerrilla sites, any gun-fire would give away clues of their secret hide-outs to the military. We had already noted in another section how, for two months there, the guerrillas had to live on 1/4 litre of bajra gruel, even without salt.

But the guerrillas, ranks and leaders, men and women, lived in great camaraderie, under these extremely difficult conditions.

Not only food, but shelter against the rain and sun was also a problem. In

deep forest, they used to erect huts, with grass and twigs. But during heavy rains, the squad members had to suffer much. They used to put their coarse village *kambal* (blanket made of sheep or goat hair) on hanging branches like a tent, with a cloth covering it on top. It used to be a good protection against even heavy downpour. During the winter months, December and January, in these hillocks, with the temperature falling to 45 F (6.7-C), it was difficult for the guerrillas. In many places bonfires could not be lighted for fear of attracting the enemy. So they used to spread on the cold ground or rock grass or leaves, whichever they could get at that particular spot, spread one kambal and two or three persons huddled together closely with another blanket to cover them all.

For quick mobility, they had to carry light apparel, light and limited personal articles, besides their rations and gun and ammunition, and first-aid box of essential medicines.

Each squad used to carry a medical chest which was standardised. The political organiser or someone or the other was given in training first-aid. But in the forest areas, with no doctor available nearby or within reasonably short time, these first-aiders tried to treat serious wounds. I had personally seen guerrillas who had received serious wounds, even compound fractures, being bandaged and treated boldly with cebezol powder, penicillin ointment and simple injections, and nursed for weeks till they could be given proper treatment in towns far away. Milk, either tinned or fresh, purchased from the cattleherds in the forests, were first given to such sick and needy comrades.

But malarial fever was the worst scourge our squads used to suffer from. In spite of a large amount of Pauldrine, quinine and quinine injections, they could not recover much. With no strong nourishing food, medicines alone did not help them to recover. I had seen comrades with high fever moving from one spot to another, with teeth clenched, walking miles leaning on other colleagues ! Such was the hard and self-sacrificing life, all for the great cause of the toiling people. To believe this great comrade-ship, one had to see it with one's own eyes. I had the good fortune to see it, and be a participant for a few weeks.

Manukota-Mulugu-Warangal Area

Manukota-Mulugu-Warangal area had been a major battlefield between the Communist guerrillas and the Government forces during all the three years beginning from 1949 to October 1951, till the Telangana armed struggle was called off. It was here that the squads, organisers, most of the leaders from the Suryapet area retreated to, and carried on the movement.

In Suryapet taluka, during the period of September-December 1948, in the centres of Kotapadu, Kummarikuntla and Chandupatla and Beeravolu and Tettalapadu, and the Garla centres of Manukota, people moved in hundreds, in village after village, and seized the grain of old as well as the new landlords who had joined the Congress police, against the people. They seized the crop of these landlords. The peasants were able to defend their crops in the face of

repeated raids. It was estimated that the grain and crop seized amounted to 8 to 10 thousand bags of foodgrains.

Similarly, the agricultural labourers went on strikes in the Chittalur, Nakrekallu centres of Nalgonda taluka; and in Suryapet taluka; in Vardhamanukota, Kesanagodu, Bopparam, Kandigatla, Elkapalli, Kodur, Chilapakunta, Kotapadu and Tummala Penubodu centres for days and defended their wage rates. They maintained 90 seers per month, and achieved a daily rate of 6 seers during the harvest period. They were able to force the landlords to sell paddy at the rate of 7 seers per rupee. In Kotapadu and Ragipadu areas, even the roads were dug up with trenches to prevent the movements of the army and the police who were being sent to suppress these struggles.

But the Indian army and police, numbering 6 to 7 thousand persons, conducted intensive raids and combing operations covering 10–30 villages at a time. In these raids incomplete reports received by the local underground Party and guerrilla headquarters, gives us the following picture: 6500 persons brutally tortured (apart from the tens of thousands being herded, lathicharged and harassed); in the course of which 60 persons died; 300 women raped, 40 of them done to death; and 42 Party and squad members and 15 ordinary peasants shot dead.

It was because of this terrific onslaught that 40 per cent of our Party members were caught, another 40 per cent became inactive, only 20 per cent continued activities. Most of them were scattered and could not be contacted but they worked on their own. Only 7 zonal organisers, 13 centre organisers and 10 squads with a total complement of 70 members reached the Garla forest areas in some organisational shape. The upper and richer sections of the peasantry and the liberal small landlords who were with the Party and the movement during the Nizam-Razakar days went against it immediately after the 'police action'. The middle sections were nursing illusions and were vacillating. Only the poor were with the Party and the movement. But the experience of these very few weeks was enough to make them shed their illusions.

Here is the summary of a report received at the State Centre, which gives an idea of the horrible methods of the repression that was let loose in the Manukot-Warangal area.

"Ellarugudem: Ramadugu Jagannath Rao, banjardar. All lands belonged to him. He participated, gun in hand, in raids in the Pindiprolu centre, even against the very first days of our struggle during the Nizam-Razakar rule. He escaped from a guerrilla raid on his house in those days and became an inmate of the Congress office in Polempalli. Even from that Congress office, he used to help the Razakars to raid the Communist villages and squads. He returned with the Indian armies, got established a camp. A cavalry platoon was stationed in his village Ellarugudem. This was the centre of Pindiprolu Jagannath Reddy, Jannareddi Deshmukh, Marripeda Damodar Reddy, and Jagannath Rao—a killers' den. The congress leader Rudradev had also joined this centre. From this centre, they used to:

- Raid on any village they choose in the taluka.
- Raped women and tortured the people and looted their houses.
- Women in every village were subjected to insults, molestation and raping. Women were raped by 4 to 5 persons at a time, without caring whether they were pregnant, whether they had just delivered or whether they were old women. Many a time, women were raped by a number of scoundrels.
- Large-scale arrests of suspected Communists or those who were suspected to have given them food.
- Thrusting of pins under the nails, driving nails into the feet, thrusting chilly powder into private and delicate parts of the body; pouring urine into mouths; trampling with boots, beating with rifle-butts.
- Shoot and kill. 33 were killed including Rayala Jaggayya, leader of Pindiprolu village who fought against Pindiprolu Jagannath Reddy, after three days of torture.
- Hang people upside down tied tree branches. Keep them for hours in that position. Start fire underneath and try to roast them in slow fire. This was repeated from 2 to 3 days.
- Force people to lie on their faces in rows side by side and jump and dance on them with boots on.
- Make people stand in rows, underneath a tree, tie them to a rope, drag them up and drop them down with a thud; pour hot water on them.
- Tie hand and foot for two days continuously, throw them in the open, sun, rain or cold. Give no food and even no water.
- Put them on thorny bushes, throw more thorny bushes over them and beat them with rods. Two persons in one such beating were killed. This particular form of torture was used on a mass scale to cow down the koya people.

(In 1960, i. e., 10 years after these days, in Burgampadu taluka, a koya old peasant described these events to me personally. You have to see his face, expression and hear his exclamation, to understand the anger and hatred he had kept subdued somewhere deep in his heart, for the perpetrators of these misdeeds—P. S.)

During February-March 1949 in the plain areas of Suryapet and Pindiprolu, the people were resisting the landlords, efforts to seize the lands and crops from their possession, when the landlords found out squads and Communist organisers who were forced to retreat from these areas. The people with food packets and provisions on their backs started searching for the squads. They were eagerly waiting for the return of the squads. They heard the news that the squads had re-organised and taken certain actions in the nearby villages. With this news, the people started re-occupying the lands from which they had been dispossessed during the intensive raids of September-December. In the Pindiprolu, Metarajipalli, Rampuram, Kummarikuntla centres, the peasants drove away the landlords, men

and foiled their attempts to plough and cultivate the lands, and they themselves started cultivating the lands. The hated landlords started running back to the towns.

Apart from this, in the two centres of Pindiprolu and Illendu, in about 90 villages, agricultural labourers went on strikes and won wage-increases. In about 20 villages, the women labourers were in the forefront and went independently on strike. The landlords threatened they would bring the police. The women strikers replied: 'If you bring your military, we will call upon our guerrilla squads to help us'. The effect of these strikes spread to 16 neighbouring villages in the Ramapuram and Bodlada centres.

The koya people also rose against the police and military who, while pursuing the guerrillas, raided their villages and subjected them to terrible atrocities, in the area of Namalapadu and Pandipampula. The enemy was organising permanent camps in Miryalapenta, Lakshmipuram, Khambalapalli, in all, in 10 places.

In Garla and Pakhala areas: In about 50 villages, 1,025 people participated in destroying paths and roads up to a length of 100 miles. In the forest belt, another 150 miles of pathways were destroyed by 500–700 people in the course of a year. They cut huge trees across them, dug deep pits in the course of a year. The narrow passages between hillocks and dense forests were closed by them by rolling down boulders and trees. In two such narrow passages, it was a regular battle between the military and the people for about 20 days. This operation was repeated three times, the people and squads closing it and the police and military clearing it for passage.

The koya youth came for military training. The guerrillas trained them, 60 joined the local village squads and 40 the regular squads. The parents were proud and happy seeing the military training which their sons were undergoing.

One day, during this time, in Koyagudem, a few militarymen tried to rape women. Both men and women resisted and surrounded them. Women took up their grain pounding rods *(rokallu)* and drove them away.

During the year, the people were able to retain 80 per cent of the land they had been cultivating, practically the whole of the land nearer the forest area, and the further one went to the plains of Suryapet, less and less percentage of the land: In about 30 villages, the peasants were able to reoccupy the lands they lost during the 1948 raids. In the forest areas, in about 150 tribal hamlets, forest lands were cleared and new *podu* cultivation extended. In all these 90 villages, where agricultural labourers went on strikes, they won a daily wage rate of 6 seers (as against 3 earlier) and in a few villages even 8 seers. For beedi leaves, in 60 villages, they doubled the rate to 6 paise from the earlier 3 paise.

The guerrillas conducted 31 raids on the police and the military camps or their patrols, killing 34 and wounding another 20. In the villages, the enemy agents, police informers, the sadist torturers of the people and hated landlords, a total of about 60 persons, were killed by the people and the squads.

But during this year, in this area, the Party, too, suffered serious losses: 8

zonal and centre organisers, 2 squad commanders and 10 experienced squad members were killed.

But, the Party was able to extend its organisation. It had 176 Party member, and auxiliary members in 38 Party groups in 20 villages, with another 250 militants in 60 more villages, and had regular contacts with 300 villages.

During 1950

The movement spread deeper and deeper into the forest areas reaching River Godavari in the east and in the north, spreading to Mulugu and Parkhala and then to Manthena of the Karimnagar district, to about 450 villages more.

In the Gundala zone, the koya people moved on a big scale, seized 1,060 bags of foodgrains, 560 head of cattle from the *patel* of Gundala and *Maktedar* of Anantaram. About 3,500 acres of forest waste were cleared and brought under cultivation. A hundred acres of land of the Gundala *patel* and *patwaris* were seized and distributed, in Garla, 264 acres, in Narasampeta taluka (Pakhala) 1,000 acres of waste land and surplus lands (150 acres) of landlords.

In the Gundala area, the movement among the koya people had become deep and widespread. There the Party was able to organise an exhibition of pictures of the Soviet life. The people exclaimed: 'When shall we achieve similar life conditions here?'

Once the police raided a koya hamlet, arrested the menfolk and was taking them to the camp. Women from the neighbouring 10 hamlets surrounded the police and prevented the police from proceeding further. The police opened fire, but the women retaliated with stones and refused to go away, unless their menfolk were released. The police had to yield ultimately.

As per the 'Briggs Plan', the Government was trying its best to evacuate all these koya hamlets and move them out of the forest, to the outskirts, into the concentration camps. In spite of many police camps in this area, repeated raids, burning of hamlets and houses, by the end of 1951, 30 hamlets escaped from this dragnet and continued living in the forest areas, shifting from one spot to another, when the police made it impossible for them to stay for long in a particular place.

A report of a raid by the police on Gundala is given to show with what ferocity these raids were conducted on the people.

Raid on Gundala

On September 6, 1950, military and the police had carried out a combing and encircling raid on the Gundala area, with about 1,500 personnel from the Allapalli camp, from the Singareni colliery camp, from Komatlagudem, etc.

The raid took place as the millet crop was ripening and was ready for harvesting. They took away as much as they could carry and drove the cattle to graze on the rest.

They destroyed hundreds of bags of crop of the starving koya and other

people, who were expecting the harvest to give at least one meal per day for a few weeks. They were robbed of their morsel of food.

These brutes did not stop in destroying the crops. They started burning the koya villages to frighten them to go to new settlement camps established by the Government. Not a single person was left in Oddugudem, Kodisala, Sampalli, Rollagadda, Devaragudem, Lingudem, Chintogudem, etc. Everything in the houses here including foodgrains, clothing, and household materials were burnt. People were not allowed to save anything. An old woman in Sampalli and another in Oddugudem were thrown into the fire and burnt alive, while these brutes went on cutting jokes at the people.

After all this barbarity, they wanted to cajole the people to support the Congress regime. Some of the koya people, who were suffering from various skin diseases and boils, were administered medicines and bandages. Congress flags were hoisted here and there. They pasted posters urging the people to fight the 'Communist violence', that theirs was not Nizam's rule, and that theirs was the Congress Government which was out to improve the lot of the people and the people need not entertain any fears. They would feed and clothe the people, would open schools and hospitals. They had come there in search of Communists who were very bad elements who cut the throats of the people. They boasted of their might, the power of their arms and boasted that they would wipe out the Communists in a short time. They threatened that those who tried to run away from the settlements or would not go to live there, would be hunted out and severely dealt with.

Some tribal elders and blackmarketeers, like Komati Ramachandrudu of Gondala, intensified their efforts to turn the tribal folk against the Communists and make them leave the forest areas and live in the settlements. One tribal leader in Yellapuram even went to the extent of betraying one squad member, Guttayya, to the police. But all their efforts failed. Many tribals refused to go to the settlements. Even those who were forced to go there, tried every means to escape from these settlements and return to their old forest abodes. They sent word to the guerrillas that under intense repression, they were forced to be in the camps but would soon return and join them. 'Do not misunderstand us, brothers. You be with us. Tell us about all those things you used to speak about. We will continue to be with you, protect you and fight against the police and the oppressors'.

In Kattugudem, in the Garla jagir area, when on September 23,1950,18 military personnel with certain home guards started their customary atrocities on the people, the men and women, under the leadership of the local squad and organiser attacked the marauding army personnel. In the clash, a subedar and 3 of his men were killed, and five more wounded. The people seized two sub-machine-guns and rifles from them. When another patrol from the nearby Bugga camp rushed to their assistance, the squad used these very weapons to drive them away.

But a big military contingent of company strength raided it. The people resisted, but, four of them – Doggala Pandayya, Musi Pullayya and two others,

had to lay down their lives. Others escaped into the forest. The military took terrible revenge, a number of persons whom they could get hold of were shot deed. But all the people of the village lived on in the forests for days and defended themselves. To stop the children from crying which would have revealed their place of hiding to the enemy, they used to shut their mouths with cloth, killed their dogs, tied stones to the necks of fowls to prevent them from making noise.

During this year, the enemy burnt 200 villages totally (houses destroyed 10,000). People were subjected to various atrocities numbering 16,280, of whom people shot dead or these who died of tortures were 73, 90 women were raped, and 212 local militants were arrested and put in jail.

While this resistance continued in the forest areas, people also seized and distributed about 900 bags of foodgrains in about 40 villages and destroyed another 1,300 bags. They destroyed paths and roads and mounted continuous attacks on the police informers killing 11 such agents.

To sum up the activities during the year 1950:

In 260 villages, 13,000 acres of waste and forest lands were newly seized and cultivated. Two hundred acres of surplus lands of landlords were distributed among the poor. In about 150 villages, 1,824 people participated and seized 2,890 bags of paddy. In 30 villages, agricultural labourers went on strike for higher wages and were able to retain 6 paise for plucking beedi leaves, which they won the year before, and got it extended to other villages where they could not do so in the past. For cutting *maddi* and teak trees, for one cart-load, they won Rs. 2 instead of the earlier one rupee and for sawing beams Rs. 6 instead of the earlier Rs. 2 and for bamboos Rs. 6 instead of the earlier rate of Re. 1 to Rs. 1.50.

The Party was able to organise 170 village committees and recruited 300 in 85 villages as local volunteers. Party membership increased to 208 in 52 cells in 34 villages. Nineteen were promoted as organisers and four as squad commanders.

The guerrillas mounted 60 raids on the police and military, killed 100 and wounded 24. They lost 3 zonal organisers, three centre organisers, and one squad commander and 33 squad members or couriers. Balaraju was one of the zonal organisers, Rajayya and Rangayya were centre organisers.

Extension to Chennur-Siripur Area in Adilabad District during 1951

In March-April, the spring and summer season had come again. The enemy started concentrating his forces to attack and annihilate the guerrillas in the forest area. More and more military was arriving in Manukota and the mining centres, the Dornakal and Narsampeta military camps, to encircle the whole area.

The combings started on a large scale. Seven to 10 hamlets in the forest were encircled at a time, and every nook and corner, every tank, stream or spring was searched for guerrillas. The military kept up its constant vigil at every water source for two days and more hoping that the guerrillas would have to come

there driven by the dire need for water, when they could easily be annihilated. In the second week of March, 90 springs were under watch simultaneously, involving more than 1,200 military personnel.

Every day somewhere or other there was a raid, and there was shooting. During this non-rainy period, there were 250 raids. Hundreds of people were brutally tortured, 16 persons were shot dead in cold blood; the enemy could capture only 13 guerrillas though he was able to force the evacuation of a few more villages from the forests reducing the number that continued to exist in that area to about 30.

But the people and the squads faced this terrific offensive boldly, determined to defeat it. The koya people, dragged into the camp villages on the outskirts of the forests, used to come every day to the forests to collect forest produce, beedi leaves, *Ippapuvvu* or inferior grass grain. They made it a point to meet the organisers and squad leaders, tell them the moves of the enemy and hand them over the necessary supplies of food and other essential goods. These koya people in the remaining 30 villages had to live a guerrilla life moving as the ever vigilant and mobile guerrilla squads and used to help them. Forty three new recruits into the regular guerrilla squads including 9 women were enrolled.

These women guerrillas were exceptionally good as couriers. Some were very good squad members, handling guns and firing at the enemy coolly and two of them had become second-in-command of the squads.

The people continued their fight against the landlords. In Garla and Pakhala (Narsampeta) centres, they confiscated 200 cattle and 400 bags of foodgrains. In Gundala zone, 100 cattle were seized and in Warangal zone, too, 300 cattle and 50 bags of foodgrains were seized.

The squads crossed River Godavari to the north and entered the Chennur taluka of Adilabad district, and later spread up to Siripur, the northernmost taluka and extended the movement to about 200 villages in the area. In this area, the people were learning about Communist guerrilla activities and were eagerly awaiting their arrival. The squad and the people joined together, as in all new areas, to confiscate the grain of the landlords; burn the village records and debt bonds. As the sweep of these actions gathered strength, the clearing and occupying of waste and forest lands and the seizure of the *anyakrantulu* (forcibly seized lands) and the demand of increased wages, used to be taken up.

Early in 1951, the State Committee leader, Comrade Bheemireddy Narasimha Reddy reached the area to guide the movement on the spot in that difficult situation. He explained to them the situation in the rest of the country, the upsurge in Karimnagar district, the extension to Amarabad and Vikarabad areas and about the campaign of Shri Ravi Narayan Reddy, backed by the 'open Party headquarters' in Bombay and by Ajay Kumar Ghosh and Dange, against the Telangana movement as terroristic and murder campaign. This was in spite of the C. C. resolution of December 1950 (mentioned earlier) in which Ajay Kumar Ghosh and other Party leaders who had differences had participated. In a meeting of all important organisers that lasted fifteen days the whole work was reviewed

and tasks were outlined further. As Comrade B. N. left at the beginning of 1951 to this area, before the C C. meeting of May 1951, he was not in a position to report on its decisions and put the organisation on the basis of the new understanding. After the C.C. meeting of May 1951, with the new understanding Comrade Devulapalli Venkateswar Rao (D.V.) went to the area, but to explain the decision of withdrawal, Sri Rajeswar Rao went to the area in November and December.

During 1951, up to the end of July, in 48 villages 500 people participated in actions on 44 occasions and confiscated 520 bags of paddy, 9 candies of dried chillies, and other goods and implements of worth Rs. 10,000 and got them distributed. They destroyed the enemies property which they could not take possession of and distribute. Six hundred cattle were distributed among 400 families. The Party was able to carry on intensive propaganda explaining its programme to the people in 200 villages, during the beedi leaves and *Ippapuvvu* picking season. Twenty more villages had returned to the forests leaving the concentration camps. The movement had spread to about 200 villages in Adilabad district in the Chennur-Siripur area.

The Party was able to recruit 65 new members including 9 women in 13 cells two of which were women's cells. The cadre were promoted—12 as squad commanders, 5 as zonal commanders, 7 as zonal organisers and 3 as area commanders.

The guerrillas carried out 64 raids on the police and the military, killing 71 police and military personnel. They liquidated 42 police informers, hated landlords and their henchmen in the villages.

The Party also lost 5 zonal and centre organisers, and 7 squad members who were killed during the half year.

An effort was made to extend the movement to the Bastar area. A squad was sent across River Godavari eastwards. But as they proceeded, they found that the language was different, and none of the preliminary conditions for even elementary political action had yet developed. On the other hand, the State Governments were alert concentrating heavy armed forces in that area. The squad suffered certain slight casualties in some engagements but was able to retreat to Telangana without losing any comrade.

While guerrillas in this area in a very difficult situation were regrouping and starting to carry out the tasks set before them, within three months, they heard on the radio that the Telangana movement was withdrawn. Comrade D. V. got delayed on the way and he could nor appraise the squads of the new understanding and ascertain their opinion whether the armed struggle could be continued till we obtained the minimum safeguards and demands. The need for such quick decision to withdraw the movement even before we got the opinion of this area is explained in the chapter on withdrawal. All the leading comrades from this area, later in the meeting of important Telangana comrades in 1952, endorsed the decision without any reservation.

5

Actions of Guerrilla Squads

a. On Police and Military Patrols and Camps
b. Attacks on Hated Landlords and their Agents

1. Raid on Party Leaders at Ellampet

All the important leaders of Nalgonda district along with an important Provincial Committee leader had gathered on the outskirts of Ellampet village (Manukot taluk). Three or four cartloads of various things including records, bren guns and other weapons were with them. Women and children were also with them. They had gathered there for a meeting.

A local landlord, who until then was pretending to be in favour of the Party, was making arrangements for food for the leaders and simultaneously sent word to the nearby military camp at Abbayipalem.

This unexpected encirclement did not, however, unnerve the leaders and they proceeded according to a plan. They hid some of the weapons, records and things in the bushes and formed themselves into three squads. While protecting the women and children, they returned the fire, pinning them to the ground and not allowing the enemy to rush at them, while the squads retreated through the only escape route on the fourth side. With rare courage and determination they kept up the fire, kept the enemy at a distance and crossed the fields.

But, right behind them was a small mound. There was no safety until they crossed the mound and reached the other side; at the same time, the mound was rather steep and getting up such a mound was not so easy. All the while, the enemy bullets were flying in the air, almost hitting the comrades. Rifles, brens and other weapons were in full play, making the whole area resound with deafening sound. The comrades were almost pressed to the wall, yet, they took shelter behind trees and some big stones, continued the fire, pinning the enemy to the ground, and managed to reach safety without any loss of life at all.

Two women comrades, who could not keep pace with the others, took shelter in the bushes throughout the whole night and joined the others only in the morning. What was noteworthy here was that both of them were mothers and their very young babies were protected by other comrades. All of them were justifiably

proud of one important comrade, who, while holding a baby in one hand, handled a rifle with the other hand, continued to keep the fire and protected not only the child but also other comrades who were under his protection.

2. Comrade Kondal Reddy (Suryapet) ambushed the military patrol that raided Nasimpeta village and started beating the people to force them pay grain levy, land revenue and to surrender *deshmukh's* lands, cattle, and sheep. Three were killed and some more wounded.
3. The suryapet taluk guerrilla squads raided Vallabhapuram, Undrakonda, Dharmapuram and Mohammadapuram, and killed Sakileru Venkateswara Rao who had his own son-in-law, and handed him over to four police agents.

Regulagadda village *patel* who handed over his son, a Party member, to the police, and started moneylending business with Rs. 17,000 of the Party money, was killed on April 9, 1950.

Similar raids on the police and the military took place at Urlagonda, Narasimhulagudem, Bopparam, Atmakur, Elkapalli, Miryala and Arvapalli, and in a few other villages, as the police or the military patrols were returning from their raids. On most occasions, the guerrillas caused them casualties, two or three, each time.

The Suryapet area guerrilla squad attacked a raiding police party returning from Bommanapalli village (Manukota taluka) to their camp at Kakarvayi. Four military persons were killed and some more wounded. 25 of many Congress Home guards who were with them, ran pell-mell and one was wounded.

In Patasuryapet, a guerrilla squad was surrounded while taking shelter in a house on January 1, 1949. It opened fire, defending itself, killed three and wounded 5 soldiers, with their rifle and grenade, but overwhelmed and shot dead.

On December 18, 1948, there was an attack on a police patrol between Penubadu and Dharmapuram village, two policemen died and three were wounded.

Military and police personnel raided Kotapadu and Ragipadu and five other villages. The guerrilla squad opened fire in different places. Seven military men were killed and they were forced to give up the raids.

Godavari Forest Area—Manukota-Mulugu Area

Gundala was a military camp in Palvancha taluk. The koya people evacuated from their hamlets were being forced to live there. Comrades and squad members caught, or brought from jails, were brought here and tortured and shot. It was here that 3 to 4 hundred tribal people and captured members were mercilessly butchered. The squad raided it and sniped at it, to keep it on tenter-hooks and retreated safely, though it lost one of its members. One day, 30 agents raided the nearby Sampella village. But the guerrillas drove them away, killing one. The military did not try to recover the body for two days.

At **Jendagattu**, Narsampet taluka, once, a guerrilla squad of 15 sent a courier to purchase foodgrains in the village but he was caught. He, under torture, told

the military the whereabouts of the squad. The squad was surrounded, but it fought back and with great difficulty it retreated behind a hillock. The squad lost 5 members, killed and carried away and two were wounded. The squad was of the Koya tribal people. If only a proper sentry had been kept, this loss could have been avoided.

Jangedu camp in Parkhala taluka from where daily raids on villages around used to take place even at nights; the guerrilla squad raided it one evening, while the military personnel were as usual chatting at 7.30 p.m., and killed four of them and disappeared. From that time, the army personnel never sat in the open *maidan*.

The squad, on another occasion, raided the military patrol hooded by the notorious camp commander, Sitapati, at Chinaganapuram and Comrade Mukundam, the leader of the squad, took sure aim and shot and killed Sitapati. This Sitapati was notorious in branding the villagers by severely beating them with tamarind birches bent in the form of a hammer and sickle.

The guerrilla squad opened fire on a military patrol of 10, on the **Gudur (Narsampeta taluka)**—Jagannathulagudem (Manukota taluka) road, as it was crossing a rivulet, killed four soldiers, and wounded a landlord who was with them. The rest fled and the guerrillas seized four rifles from the dead.

Guerrillas ambushed a military patrol on its way to raid the village on the road between **Nelancha** and **Karvai (Narsampeta taluka)**, opened fire and killed two. The military returned the fire but the squad withdrew without losses, as per plan.

Guerrillas ambushed a military raiding party near Lavvala village on the Nagaram-Mulugu road. Three soldiers were killed and some more injured. The guerrillas, hoping that after this, the military party would not proceed to raid the village, but would turn back to the camp, took a short cut, and at an appropriate place were waiting for the return of the enemy. According to their expectations, the military group that was returning with the dead bodies, once again ran into the guerrillas fire and lost two more. Reinforcements came to the military. The guerrillas withdrew without any losses. On this road, many a sniping and ambushes were planned by the guerrillas against the military and police trucks which it used quite regularly.

Kamaram camp (Narsampeta taluka) was located in the midst of forests, with trenches all around and with the sandbag protection. All night the military used to remain in the camp, and they moved only during daytime. Guerrillas used to snipe at the camp at night quite often, making them always jittery and insecure. They used to waste their ammunition firing for long periods. Once, just before daybreak, the sentry thinking that the danger of any attack from the guerrillas was no more, was relaxing, when the guerrilla squad shot him dead. The camp wasted its ammunition for quite a time.

Miryalapenta military camp in Narsampeta was in the forests and there were big trees near the camp. Regular guerrilla squads and local squads together

planned and surrounded it. At daybreak, the attack started. Seven soldiers and two sentries were killed and the others rushed into trenches. But the squad opened bren gun and rifle fire on them from all sides. It was estimated that 8 more soldiers were killed and some more wounded. The guerrillas used their ammunition sparingly while the enemy went on furiously expending theirs. News came after some time that additional forces were on the way, and the guerrillas withdrew. This daring and prolonged attack created such panic among the soldiers that they had to reinforce their small camps with additional personnel.

The Gangaram road: The 100 km long road between Illendu and Narsampeta, deep in the thick forests, was the scene of many a sniping and ambush action by the guerrillas. Once at a particularly favourable spot, 3 miles from Gangaram, the guerrillas lay in ambush from 4 a. m. till 9 a. m. when the military lorry came and had to apply brakes just on the spot where heavy wooden trunks were piled up across the path. As the military personnel started jumping down from the lorry, the guerrillas opened fire inflicting serious losses, the estimate being 10 killed and more wounded. As another lorry was seen approaching, the guerrilla squads withdrew.

The second time, near Chemhuvanigudem at the Chettupalli hillocks, the road was dug up and covered with bamboos and a thin layer of mud to make it look normal. One military lorry fell into the covered-up ditch. The driver and a few others were killed. While fire was being exchanged, three more lorries full of military reached the spot. But the guerrillas retreated without any loss. The soldiers, in their fury, killed two innocent tribals, whom they saw on the way back.

The third time, on April 22, 1950, a powerful mine was laid, cleverly camouflaged, on the road, with explosives seized from the Illendu coalmines. These lorries were going in a convoy. The first crossed the mine and was blown up into pieces. Fifty soldiers were killed. Before the guerrillas could seize the guns, the second lorry reached the spot.

A lightning raid on the **Karepalli camp** (Illendu) by Comrade Seetaramarao's squad, killing the sentry and firing a few rounds, made the inmates keep up their fire intermittently all night.

The soldiers used to go regularly to a toddy shop from **Bayyaram**. The squad once ambushed them, killed two and seized their rifles and dress.

There was another big concentration camp for tribal people in **Allapalli** in Palvancha taluka from where constant raids on neighbouring villages were being made. The guerrilla squads one night attacked it. When they raided the camp, only 15 soldiers were left in the camp, as all the others had gone for raiding villages. The squad opened fire on soldiers who were sitting and gossiping, and killed one. The soldiers took position and returned the fire. Just then, three armed soldiers who were returning to the camp were taken by surprise by the squad and were killed. The squad seized their weapons. But they could not press their attack further and retreated.

Five guerrilla squads, assisted by the local tribal people and miners, attacked

the explosives dump of the Illendu coal-mines. The guards tried to resist, but seeing the workers mood and the large number of guerrillas and others surrounding them, gave up. Fifteen bags of explosives and fuses and detonators were safely taken away and they were stored in a large number of places, even at 70–100 km away so that the police or military could not recover them. For a whole week, secret parties were sent by the authorities but of no avail. A dozen tribal villages were burnt and a large number of people tortured but they could not get any information.

On August 2, 1949, the guerrillas took position on both sides of the railway track between **Manukota** and **Gundratimadugu.** An armed patrol was sighted at 8 p.m. and was subjected to thorp sten and rifle fire. Three were killed and three wounded, but the patrol returned fire and prevented the guerrillas from approaching the dead and seizing the arms. A military train approached and the guerrillas withdrew. From then onwards, foot patrolling was rarely done by the enemy. On both sides of the railway track, all trees were cleared for a few hundred yards.

But again and again, guerrillas used to snipe at the traffic, and telegraph lines and railway track were torn off a number of times, dislocating the running of trains for hours, and sometimes days.

An armed patrol proceeding from **Sriramagiri camp** to Chetlamupparam, was sniped at but it went on firing back for quite a time. Another time, another patrol proceeding to Munagaledu was ambushed and one was killed. Yet another time, two soldiers were killed between Avanagallu and Mudupugallu. Thus continuous harassing, ambushes and sniping were kept up.

During the three years of struggle against the Indian army attacks, in this area, there were about 400 actions and clashes between the armed forces and the guerrilla squads.

- June 13, 1949: two policemen were killed when their party was on the way to raid *Arpinapalli* from the Apparajupalle camp.
- July 2, 1949: the guerrillas opened fire on a subedar loitering near the Chetlamupparam camp and disabled him for life.
- November 14, 1949: the guerrillas raided a military camp, killed 3 and wounded 3 in retaliation for the military killing of a koya tribal comrade in *Alligudem.* The camp was vacated.
- December 3, 1949: raid on *Nagaram* (Pakhala taluka) camp, one killed and another wounded.
- January 18, 1950: nine soldiers were shot dead and 8 wounded with sten and rifle fire while they were on the way back from raids on villages, between *Matwada* and *Guduru.*
- January 30, 1950: an army patrol was parading to keep "peace" between *Madaram* and *Mulugu.* The guerrillas opened fire, killed four and wounded three. The marches were immediately discontinued.

- March 1, 1950: a platoon of army personnel returning after raiding *Danialpadu* was fired upon by the guerrillas and one was killed.
- March 3, 1950: the guerrillas ambushed a patrol which was returning from a raid, killed two and broke the leg of another.
- March 11, 1950: the guerrillas raided the *Kothapeta* camp and shot dead the sentry.
- March 12, 1950: raid on police lorries which were burning Kothagudem village between Bayyaram and Ramagundla. Two were killed. On March 16, 1950, clash with police and its dog squad. No losses on either side.
- March 23, 1950: a group of militarymen going out from the *Polaram* camp (Narsampeta taluka) were fired upon by the guerrillas; two of them were killed. Exchange of fire continued for quite some time. The guerrillas retreated safely.
- March 28, 1950: a plane located guerrillas on the *Gaddigutta* hillocks. The military combed the whole area for hours, but could not locate them. While they were returning, the guerrillas ambushed one batch at *Mamidigundala* and killed three; another batch was ambushed at *Nagaram.*
- March 31, 1950: the military from the Kothapeta camp raided Takkellapadu and burnt it and were returning when they were ambushed. Three soldiers were killed.
- April *9,* 1950: *Ramapuram camp*: a patrol on its way to Mushimi village was surprised and dispersed by the guerrillas. They released the people who were being compelled to make ropes.
- April 11, 1950: the military and Home guards after raiding *Apprajipalli* were returning. The guerrillas ambushed them and killed 12. Seshireddi, a notorious killer of the people, was killed in this ambush.
- April 12, 1950: the military from the Guduru camp was raiding Mathewda village. Their sentry outside was shot dead by the guerrillas. Hearing the firing, the raiding party in the villages ran helter-skelter.
- April 17, 1950: a patrol from Kothagudem on guard on a road under construction was fired at. Three were killed and one wounded.
- April 18, 1950: three lorryloads of military were ambushed near *Tirumalagendi* and three sepoys were killed.
- April 22, 1950: soldiers were returning with 20 cartloads of looted property after raiding *Suddarevu* and *Khambhalapalli* villages. Guerrillas opened fire, killing three.
- May 7, 1950: near *Chandragudem,* telegraph wires were cut for a distance of 5 km. and traffic dislocated for hours.

In Khammam–Palvancha Area

- January 1, 1949: in a clash with the guerrillas between **Tallada** and **Kothagudem** two armed police and their commander were killed.

- January 29, 1949: at **Rollapadu,** the guerrillas opened fire on a police jeep wounding an officer and a constable who were forced to take cover. When a military van stopped to rescue them, the guerrillas opened fire on it, killed one and withdrew.
- March, 20, 1949: at **Moddulapalli** the guerrillas opened fire on a passing military lorry and killed three.
- March 26, 1949: another passing lorry near **Kothagudem** was fired upon, killing four and wounding another four.
- April 27, 1949: the guerrillas opened fire on a jeep on **Tallada-Kothagudem** road and killed 2 officers.
- June 22, 1949: the Suddarevu camp was raided and one policeman was shot dead. Also John, a police agent of the camp, was killed. Comrade Veerachari, who was wounded in the leg, was captured by the police.
- In Pindiprolu, there was a cavalry unit at the disposal of Jagannath Reddy. The guerrillas raided them and killed two horses and wounded two others. The camp was withdrawn as a result of this raid.
- Narsampeta: Nelancha village, the military went in search of a squad and showered hundreds of bullets on it, but could not get at it. The squad killed one sepoy.
- Mallepalli forest area: Two forest chowkidars who tried to collect taxes were killed.
- Rayamadaram (Illendu taluka): Patwari Bhimeswar Rao, while returning with seized grain with military escort, was ambushed by the guerrilla squad. Four were killed including the patwari. Others ran away. One .303 rifle and one sten-gun were seized by the guerrillas (May 7, 1949).
- Narasimhasagaram (Illendu): Tulasayya and Lakshmadu, two Home guards, were killed on July 12, 1950.

Ibrahimpatnam (Bagatu Area)—Devarkonda-Amarabad Area

Ibhahimpatnam Zone

- The Arutla camp which was in a grove was raided by the squad from three sides, killing three. Later it retreated safely. Next morning, the camp was vacated. Deshmukh Chelama Reddy who used the military and had become a menace to the whole area was killed by the people and the guerrillas.
- Another camp located near Chittapuram in a grove was similarly raided, killing two soldiers. It was also wound up.
- A combined camp was set up in the Arutla village itself in a stone bungalow.
- Guerrilla squads attacked a cavalry unit in the Gowrelli camp *and* killed two horses.
- Loyapalli camp: the soldiers caught hold of two sympathisers, Mallayya and Somayya from Ellamma Thanda, and were taking them to the camp. But

the squad attacked them on the way. In the confusion, both the captured escaped. After a year, they went back to the village and started tilling their lands. Some agents informed the Loyapalli camp. They rushed to the spot and shot the two peasants dead. But the squad took revenge by killing the informers immediately afterwards.

Later, in another raid on the camp by the guerrillas, on December 1, 1949, the commander was killed and four modern arms captured. This whole raid was planned through an arrack shop dealer. The camp was located in *zamindar* Krishnarao's bungalow. People got enthused that the guerrilla squads were capable of raiding military camps, and seizing weapons. The sepoys who surrendered and gave up arms were allowed to go away without being harmed. The camp was wound up.

- A few days later, an agent who got the police to raid our squad earlier was shot dead in the fields on December 17, 1949. Other informers ran away to the towns.
- Military personnel, on a forage raid on **Pilupalapadu** village, were fired upon by the guerrillas. Their lorry tyres were burst. The soldiers busy trying to molest a woman ran for their lives.
- **Ibrahimpatnam:** the police outpost was raided, the sentry killed and the rest of the police ran away. Four guns were seized by the guerrillas.
- **Sarurnagar-Sikhargram:** the police camp, four miles away from the Hyderabad city, was raided by the guerrillas and three policemen were killed.
- **Julur Bhuvanagiri:** A toddy lorry was stopped. Two rifles from the armed police were seized by the guerrillas.
- **Kothapalli:** The police station in Kolhapur taluka, Mahbu-nagar district, was raided and six rifles seized.
- **Subbareddigudem:** The home guard centre led by Tippana Krishna Reddy was raided in October 1951. Seventeen guns were seized. Krishna Reddy was a notorious landlord oppressor who had hunted our guerrillas and was responsible for killing about 6 persons, including Comrade Mangayya at Kaluvapalli.
- **Lakmapuram and Medirampalli,** Huzurnagar taluka. The home guard centres were raided by the guerrillas, seven muzzle-loaders, 13 mounds of gunpowder and two shot-guns were seized.
- **Vadapalli Centre,** Miryalagudem: a police patrol was ambushed, two policemen were killed and their guns seized.
- Near **Mellacheruvu,** a police patrol was ambushed. Guerrillas killed two and seized their two guns.

Vikarabad Area

- In **Thottipalli** village, a sub-inspector of police was surrounded in a hut, was beaten, and his pistol seized on June 2, 1950.

- The guerrillas seized two unarmed policemen on their way to the Kuncharam police station, seized the records and let them off. In Bidar taluka, bordering Vikarabad area, the guerrillas seized 14 guns from the home guards, who were armed to fight the guerrillas.

Karimnagar–Janagaon Area

Janagaon Area

- The **Bucchanapeta camp** was outside the village. The guerrilla squad raided it and exchanged fire for some time. Later, the camp was wound up and set up in a strong building inside the village itself.
- Two armed persons from the **Tarigoppulu** camp were returning from the **Gandapalli** village for serving warrants on some people. The guerrilla squad getting the news, surrounded them on the way and forced them to give up their weapons, in broad daylight, within two miles from the camp.
- A patrol on its way to raid villages from **Aleru camp** was ambushed near Talimpuvagu. The guerrillas killed four of them and retreated safely.
- The **Akkanapet camp** was raided while the men inside were taking their meals. The guerrilla fire killed three soldiers. At another time, the landlords of the village accompanied by a guard of 5 went to Kondapuram to recover their cattle. But the squad attacked them, killed one landlord and wounded another. The military personnel ran away. People drove the cattle back to their houses.

A police raiding party on its way to the **Nimmapalli camp** (Medak) was ambushed and one was killed and another wounded. The guerrilla squad took another chance and raided the camp itself which was located in the midst of the village. They threw a bomb into it, but its splinters did not harm anyone. The squad withdrew. But the next day the camp was wound up. The enemies of the people who were helping the camp authorities, also fled from the village. People felt tremendous relief.

The Akunur camp (Sultanabad taluka) was attacked by a guerrilla squad. A sudden volley from it frightened the 18 persons in the camp, and they ran away. The squad found one rifle abandoned and took it and retreated.

- A 20-strong police group returning from a raid to their camp at *Chintakani* (Manthena taluka) was sniped at by a five- member guerrilla squad, inflicting four casualties. The squad retreated, but the enemy wasted its ammunition for some time. After that they were careful in their movements and moved only in large numbers.
- The **Kondapalli camp** (Siddipeta taluka) was raided and four soldiers were wounded.

The Sircilla police station in Karimnagar district was raided. Four rifles and 500 rounds of ammunition were seized on June 10, 1950.

- In **Manthena,** a police zamedar was killed on May 24, 1950, in Bhirangapur.
- In **Nimmapalli,** the police camp was raided by the squads on August 17, 1950. Ten policemen including an inspector lost this lives.
- Near **Ennapalli,** in the forest, a military patrol was fired upon by the guerrilla squad from two different directions. One was killed.
- A police patrol in **Samudrala** was attacked, six were killed.
- In the attack in **Hansanipalli,** three were killed.
- In the attacks near the **Garjanapalli** camp and **Sivalingala** in Karimnagar, one was killed.

In all, in the actions in Karimnagar area, 23 policemen were killed.

Adilabad

- The **Masiapet Deshmukh's** (Adilabad) bungalow was raided. He was considered a good hunter and boasted that he had killed 25 tigers. He was overpowered and forced to give up his rifle and three more guns and ammunition, and 200 bags of paddy were distributed to the people.
- A military lorry was spotted by a squad returning from a meeting of workers of the **Kadam project;** the squad opened fire on it, killing three, and retreated into the forest. While retreating, at another spot on the same road, they ran into another group of armed patrol; again they killed one more and retreated safely.
- An armed patrol was ambushed in a rivulet while it was returning after a raid on **Somaram** village, where they had pulled down the red flag. The squad killed four of them.
- An armed patrol returning to their camp at **Gadilapalli** was ambushed, three of them were killed; reinforcements were rushed but before they could arrive, the guerrilla squad retreated safely.
- **On Chennur road,** the guerrillas ambushed a passenger bus, as in every such bus two armed police men were on duty, burst its tyres, stopped it and seized weapons.

Raids on Police Stations in Union Territory

- In **Penuganchiprolu** (Nandigama taluka, Krishna district) the police camp was raided by guerrillas and 15 guns were seized but on their way they were betrayed; they not only lost the guns but a squad member, Comrade Nasarayya, was killed. The others were able to break through safely.
- **Siddeshwarapuram,** Nandikotkur taluka, Kurnool district: the home guard camp was raided by guerrilla squads; 7 shot guns, 7 muzzle-loaders and three rifles were seized.
- The **Gadivemula** police station in Kurnool district was successfully raided by guerrilla squads on June 2, 1951. They seized 8 muskets, 250 rounds of ammunition, 9 bayonets, 8 redcaps and water bottles. They destroyed the

police records and confiscated Rs. 2,200 cash and 60 tolas of gold and half a mound of silver found in the police station.

- The **Acchampeta** police station in Sattenapalli taluka (Guntur district) was raided by the guerrilla squads on April 16. 1950; 74 shot guns and rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition were captured. Two police sentries were killed.
- The **Ellampeta** police station was raided on September 25, 1950, and five rifles and one revolver were seized after a prolonged and determined attack. One of the guerrillas, Comrade Kanakayya, was killed.
- **Pullalacheruvu:** the police station in Markapur taluka of Kurnool district was raided by a guerrilla squad of 12, and 12 rifles, 5 muzzle loaders and a revolver were captured.

Enemy Agents and Hated Landlords Killed

Manukota Area

1. Sankisa: Deshmukh Ranga Reddy who was raiding villages, looting and burning in the name of recovering his lost property during the *Razakar* period. He conducted regular raids for months. He had 150 kept in jail, and seized 225 *barmars* (muzzle-loaders) from the people, 350 rounds of shot—one ton of lead, one quintal of gun-powder and 105 uniforms. The guerrillas had vowed to take revenge on him.
2. On March 3, 1950, Ahmmed Khan, police *patel* for 24 villages.
3. In Manukota taluka, the Gudur Deshmukh, on June 14, 1950.
4. In Vamanur village, More Veerayya, an agent of Jannareddy Pratap Reddy who was notorious for extracting forced labour (*vetti*) and evictions, atrocities and for many military raids on the village.
5. In Datla village, Lingala Butchayya, notorious for illegal exactions and providing young girls to be raped by the military, and an informer.
6. In Edulapusapalli, landlord Rallakanti Venkatareddy and his son Bucchi Reddy who were active Congress *Razakars*, torturing people with the help of the police (July 28, 1949).
7. In Mannegudem, Chennayya, Congress *Razakar*, who looted houses, raped women and assisted the police in looting.
8. In Alamkhanipet (Narsampeta taluka), a hated landlord, Ramayya, who used to hang people. He had earlier acted as a Razakar agent.
9. Jangalapalli landlord, Musipalli Narasayya, owner of 1,000 acres and a mill who got police to raid 40 villages (November 5, 1949).
10. In Kattukuru (Burghampadu), 3 police informers responsible for the squad of 'Rifle Ramulu' being destroyed (October 14, 1949).
11. In Vadlakonda village, Challakonda Venkata Reddy, even while he was taking shelter in the military camp (November 14, 1949).
12. Suravaram village (Manthena taluka): Challa Rajayya (landlord), Kanukuntla

Jogayya (police patel) and B. Linggayya, a notorious village oppressor. All these helped the police to molest the mother of Comrade Lokshminarsu, a centre organiser.

Khammam Madhira Area

13. Govindapuram: Ummineni Ramayya. The police raided, beat the people, none gave out any secret. Twenty five children, of 4 to 12 years, were taken to the camp. They were offered sweets, and also threats were held out. Yet none said a word.
14. Produttur: On August 1, 1949, landlord Venkata Ranga Rao and his son, Chandra Mouleswar Rao, who had earlier helped *Nizam's Razakars* and were now helping the Indian police; responsible for the arrest, torture and death of Comrade Chelmayya, a Party organiser, and for repeated police raids on villages.
15. Kurnavelli village (Khammam taluka): Kommineni Prakash Rao, an oppressive hated landlord, who was always taking shelter in the military camp (November 3, 1949).

Huzurnagar-Miryalagudem Area

16. Kalmalacheruvu: Lacchireddi, who was responsible for a number of militants being shot by the police. A woman, the mistress of the Huzurnagar police inspector, who seized distributed lands, was passing secrets to the police and got a number of militants arrested and shot dead.
17. Kapugallu: Muthavarapu Kotayya and Sitaramayya. Their houses and groundnut stock worth Rs. 10,000 were also destroyed. Chinta Kotireddy was another notorious enemy and landlord of the same village who was also taking shelter in the military camp.
18. Notorious landlord Kandibandh Jankirarna Rao and his stooge in Huzurnagar (November *29,* 1949).
19. Kamareddi Sahukar who got Kummari Muthayya murdered and who had a constant military guard to protect him.
20. Tirupatayya and Udara Veerayya, two home guards who betrayed Comrade Are Papayya and tortured him, got women raped and looted the people (December 14, 1948).
21. Nelamarri (Munagala Pargana): Venkata Narasimha Reddy, landlord, enemy of the people from 1946, who was responsible for Comrade Vengala Papayya being shot dead.
22. Garaguntapalem (Miryalagudem): Ranga Reddy who was responsible far the death of Comrade Alwala Narsimha Reddy and was seizing lands distributed to the peasants.
23. Bothalapalem: Kondayya, an oppressor, who used to torture agricultural labourers and seize distributed lands, who got agricultural labourer leader Akarapu Saidulu arrested and shot dead.

24. Malakachcrla: Patel Ananta Ramulu, a big landlord, who stayed in the Adividevulapalli camp and got villages raided.
25. Nellikallu: Ramanayya, once in the squads, who was a drunkard and was expelled; joined the Chelakurti landlords' camp and was actively participating in terrorising the people and taking bribes.
26. Rangapuram: Potu Venkatanarasayya, a village oppressor, from the beginning opposed to the movement, especially agricultural labour struggles; after 'police action', he got people beaten, and had the heads of women of the Party and guerrilla members, and moustaches of menfolk, shaved, and who got all militants arrested.
27. Chitlakunta (Acchampeta or Amarabad taluka): Lacchi Reddy, responsible for three lambadi militants being shot dead. He was killed in a guerrilla raid on home guards in the Venkateswaram camp.

Bhongir—Ibrahimpatnam Area

28. In Madapuram, Pamula Kistayya, Jalalpuram Patel, who helped the military camp raids on 30 villages around; was notorious for illegal exactions, compulsory levy; had got Comrade Gunda Keshavulu, Party leader, arrested.
29. Brahmanapalli: Hanumantu, *goonda* landlord, who gave information to get Kondandarami Reddi killed, and ran wild committing atrocities.
30. Bhattugudem: Ramachandra Reddy who, with the help of the Indirala military camp, organised raids and became a menace to about 20 villages. This hated landlord who tortured the mother of a guerrilla too, was killed while the military was pinned down by the guerrilla fire.
31. Mailaram village: Talari Pitchayya who got soldiers drunk and raped women; he himself tried to rape a woman.
32. Arutla village (Ibrahimpatnam taluka): Deshmukh Chalama Reddy who organised military raids and became a menace to all in the whole area.

These are only a few names of the hated landlords and enemy agents who were killed during the struggle.

Five hundred landlords and their agents were killed by July 1949, including the *zamindars* of Akkannapeta and Pusukuri Narasimha Rao of Janagaon taluka. Landlords were afraid to go back to the villages and occupy lands but continued to stay in the camps (according to the Military Governor.)

Nimmala Ramulu, the notorious Congress leader of Chelakurti, Miryalagudem taluka, said that 957 landlords and their agents had been killed by the Communist guerrillas.

6

People's Upsurge in Karimnagar and other New Areas

The Andhra Mahasabha was well-established among the people of Karimnagar district even before the movement against the *Nizam-Razakar* regime had started. During 1947-1948, Andhra Mahasabha workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party, organised themselves into guerrilla squads and fought against the terror regime. Comrades Prabhakar Rao, Damodar Reddy and Bhupati Reddi and some squad leaders were killed by the enemy in those actions. The armed struggle in that district received a serious set-back. But among the people, the hatred against the *Nizam-Razakar* regime mounted. They were eagerly awaiting the advent of the guerrilla squads and the Communist leaders, stories of whose heroic defence of the toiling masses against the Union armies in the neighbouring districts, were inspiring them.

When the Party ultimately sent a few organisers and three guerrilla squads to extend the movement in the Karimnagar-Adilabad area, the peasants and the agricultural labourers received them with tremendous enthusiasm, and started confiscating the grain and properties of the hated landlords, and destroying their fortress bungalows. During the short period of three months, May - July 1950, the people confiscated 1,000 bags of foodgrains and had it distributed, as well as two lakh rupees worth of household goods and agricultural implements. They razed to the ground 12 bungalows of the landlords and liquidated 16 police personnel and 26 police informers, goondas and landlords.

The police and government officials were nervous, afraid of the guerrilla attacks. One night somebody focussed a torchlight on the police station. The sentry and others almost ran away in panic thinking that the guerrillas had arrived. Another day, a cot fell down in a taluka office with a big thud; all the persons working there scattered helter-skelter. Yet another day, the alarm bell

rang in the munsiff's court when some under-trial thieves escaped, but the police in the nearby police station stayed put in their station. When the higher officials admonished them, they retorted, if they had rushed to the court, who would have protected the station from the guerrillas?

Rain Sircilla Police Station: People's Upsurge

It was in this atmosphere that the guerrillas raided the Sircilla police station on

June 10, 1950. A squad crept slowly close to the sentries and opened fire. The sentries dropped their guns in panic and ran for their lives. The squad rushed into the station, captured four rifles and ammunition and set free seven persons who were kept in the lock-up as suspected Communists. Even the police on guard in the taluka office threw their guns down and rushed away in the belief that guerrillas would spare their lives if they were unarmed.

That whole night, all the landlords and exploiters who were living away from the villages seeking safety, did not sleep, shaking in fear and praying to their gods. The poor people came out on the streets, loudly demonstrating their joy, and the town appeared as if liberated.

The news of the attack on the Sircilla station spread like wildfire throughout the district. All the officials on tour rushed back to their headquarters. The small police camps established in interior villages were vacated. Captain Nanjappa, special officer in charge of suppressing the Telangana movement, declared special measures and rushed to the district.

The landlords and the hated exploiters ran from the villages to the towns. The people rose in a great onrush against the local tyrants in the villages.

The levy system of foodgrains from all peasants, even from the poorest, the corruption and bribery of the officials by which the big landlords escaped their due and the whole burden fell on the mass of the peasantry, and that in the background of scarcity conditions in that district during the year, made the people's anger and hatred reach a flash-point. The successful raid on Sircilla sparked the fire. The grain procurement officers had to run away from the villages.

In Sultanabad taluka, one peasant spotted a levy grain inspector, jumped on him, caught his ear between two stones and pressing it, demanded in anger, 'Will you dare come again for collection of grain?' That inspector in utter terror cried, 'Never, never in my life', and begged for life. He was let off. That was the mood of the peasantry. The collection of levy was given up.

The people started attacking the hated landlords, confiscating their grain and property, destroying their houses which were likely to be converted into strong police outposts, and even killing a few of the most notorious ones.

The police considered Nimmapalli, Kanparti, Bandapalli and Galipalle as strongholds of the Communists, and raided them on a massive scale. Immediately after the Sircilla raid, mass beatings took place. But as soon as the police went away, the people attacked landlord Raghava Rao and *Sahukar* Lakshmirajam, and confiscated their grain, salt, oil tins, clothing and distributed them among the poor and the needy. Their houses were razed to the ground. Within a few days, a police camp was established in the village and mass beatings, tortures and looting by the police started. But one day, the guerrilla squad, with the full cooperation of the people attacked it and hurled a hand grenade. After that the police dared not move out on their forages. One day they shot dead a peasant working in the fields and tried to fool the people saying that it was done by the Communists, but the people retorted boldly that it was done by the police murderers.

The people seized foodgrains, gold, silver and other goods from the houses of big landlords, Narsinga Rao of Ernapalli, Chinna Narsinga Rao of Timmapuram of Sircilla taluka; from Itakula Narsinga Rao of Rudrangi, from Venkata Rao and Keshava Rao of Govindaram, from Potaram Maktedar and from Ramachandra Rao of Nukalamarri, all of Jagtial taluka. In all these places, it had been a regular practice for the people and the squads to raze to the ground the stone *gadis* of these landlords to prevent them from being used as police camps.

One of the most notable actions of the people was against Dharmaram Chokka Rao, the most notorious of all the zamindars of Jagtial for his rapacious exploitation of over 40 villages and hamlets around Bhimavaram. This blood-sucker fled to the town with his family during the Razakar days and did not return. He used to get his affairs managed by his supervisor. The guerrilla squads mobilised people from over 20 villages and raided his massive *gadi*. Three hundred bags of foodgrains, 40 mounds of silver articles and four cartloads of brassware and other articles worth one lakh rupees were confiscated and distributed. The *gadi* was razed to the ground. The police came and raided house after house but could seize only 100 bags of foodgrains from the peasant houses and nothing else.

Movement Spreads to Neighbouring Districts

The movement spread to the neighbouring talukas of Medak and Nizamabad districts. The people of Annavaram in Kamareddi taluka of Medak district hearing the news that guerrillas had burnt the village records of Reddipeta, went and invited the squads to come to their own villages and help them get rid of age-old oppression. They narrated their tales of woe. 'The *jagirdar* has sucked our blood. After the 'Jai Hind' Government was established, we expected our difficulties to go, but on the contrary, they have further multiplied. Show us the way out and teach us the methods to fight our enemies. Do not be afraid of police attacks. We are all united. No one will give any information to the police. We will keep watch and guard you'. The squads reached the village and burnt down some bungalows. The squads were led to a safe hide-out. The police came the next day and started beating the people but could not get any information from them. The guerrilla squads carried on surprise attacks on the police to harass them. Once the police arrested a peasant and took him to the Kamareddy police station. But 300 people followed them and got him released. The people in all the nearby villages stopped paying rents to the landlords and taxes to the Government as well as cattle grazing fees.

In Nizamabad district, the *jagirdar* of Vannajipet went off to the Hyderabad City, as he feared the people's retaliation, for he had earlier grabbed their lands. He owned, then, 500 acres of land, and did not allow any water being drawn by the peasants to their fields. He monopolised the whole of it. *Harijans* and other people fully cooperated with the squad, seized the grain and agricultural implements and distributed them among themselves and destroyed the *gadi*. Three

days later, the police raided the villages and beat the people and arrested 22 of them, but to no avail.

Similarly, the people of Chimalapalli *Jagir* invited the squad and with its help seized the grain and Rs. 10,000 worth of other articles of the *jagirdar* and levelled down the *gadi*. The next day the police arrived and repeated their beatings and arrested 18 and a police camp was set up. But the landlords were not sure of their lives, rushed to the towns and dared not return to the villages.

Zamindar Gopalarao had vast lands in Garjanapalli. His brother-in-law, Hanumantha Rao, was the President of the Sircilla Taluka Congress Committee. He issued circulars to the Congress workers to help the police to arrest and hound out the Communist guerrillas. He raised funds to recruit goondas even from among Lambadis. The police raided lambadi tandas repeatedly. Yet even the two or three whom he recruited were forced to surrender to the people and pay fines for going against the people's interests.

The police gave protection to some dacoits and tried to palm off their lootings as decoities committed by the Communists. The people caught and handed over a notorious dacoit, Venkatareddi of Khasimpet, but the police let him off. The Communist guerrilla squads caught two other notorious dacoits who had killed a merchant and committed a highway robbery. They were brought before the people, arraigned and were shot dead. Following that, deceit and anti-social goonda acts suddenly and sharply declined.

This people's upsurge spread to nearly 400 villages in the course of 3 months. Guerrilla squads and organisers were in close and regular contact with about 300 villages. At first, some well-to-do small traders and rich peasants were apprehensive and a good chunk even left for the towns. But as the squads carried on explanatory campaigns and when they saw that the squads were only taking action against the most hated oppressors and their agents, and the interests of other sections were being protected, their fears were allayed and they returned.

Police Attacks and People's Resistance

These victories of the people had to be won, undergoing tremendous sufferings and sacrifices.

In Kondraopet - 40 people, in Bommanadevipalli - 47, Tirumalapuram - 40, Timmayyapalli - 46, in Tamsagar - 20, in Nachepalli - 46 persons, to give only a few instances, were horribly beaten. In Balarajupalli, Narsimhareddi was arrested, tortured for 8 days and at the end, a spindle was thrust into his testicles.

In Anantaram, in western Janagaon, they stripped naked Ramakka, the mother of a comrade and trampled on her with boots on, to force her to reveal the whereabouts of her son. The heroine sent word, 'We may suffer many atrocities, but we will not reveal any secret to the police dogs. You, comrades, be careful and take all precautions'.

The police raided Manala in Armur taluka, tortured 500 persons, raped 12

women and killed five persons—Neelam Krishnayya, Kishan, Chala Yellayya, Mudam Mallayya and one more. In Konapuram, Jagtial taluka, they shot dead the lambadi people's leader, Lachha Naik. They tortured Janu and Chakki Venkayya, branded them round the necks with red hot irons and as they still refused to reveal the squad's whereabouts, they were shot. In Chintakunta, two peasants were beaten unconscious and were shot dead.

As it was everywhere in Telangana, the Government tried the 'Briggs Plan' of evacuation of villages of tribal peoples, of settlements of backward people like Lambadis from the forests or from isolated spots far away from big populated areas, to prevent them from becoming sources of help to the guerrillas. In the villages of Manala, Tallapalli, Banjapalli, Sardarpuram, Samavaripeta, the military cruelly beat the people, starved them and forced them to live in huts near the police and military camps. But the people resisted them. The people of Manala tanda were forced to vacate their settlement under terror, but the moment the guerrilla squad contacted them, they returned to it within a day. The people of Tallapalli tanda, after a month's resistance in their new huts near the police camp, returned to their old place.

In Banjapalli, in the same way, people returned to their old place. After a guerrilla raid on the police in this village, the police returned to mass beatings, saying, 'You bring the guerrillas to attack us, then face the consequences'. A lambadi woman, under severe beating, shouted back, 'So far we have not done it. But in future, we will certainly bring them to take revenge on you'.

The police in Narmeta (Janagaon taluka) arrested Rajya and took him to the station, beating him all the while, to ferret out the whereabouts of the guerrilla squads. The people of the village mobilised and surrounded the station and got him released. In Kesireddipalle and Velidanda villages, the people who were forced to do night watch, prevented police lorries from entering the village at night time. In Raghavapuram and Bahirampalli, the police raped some women, while their husbands were away on night watch. Thereupon, all the villagers refused to go on night watch and started safeguarding their own hearths and homes.

The guerrilla squads were actively helping the people in their resistance, by numerous attacks on the police in their camps, on their foraging patrols and on the hated oppressors and police informers.

In Nizamabad district, officials were supervising repairing of paths and roads, for large-scale raids on villages. The guerrillas and the people cut trees across them and put up a board saying, 'Police officials will be finished off'. The shepherds told the police that the guerrillas had mined the spot. At this, they turned their jeeps off the road, to bypass it, but ran into the ambush of the guerrillas. Three policemen and one inspector were killed. This took place on August 7, 1950.

The Nimmapalli police camp was raided by the squads on August 17. Ten

policemen including an inspector lost their lives. People said most of them died and another inspector who escaped resigned his job.

On September 5, 1950, there was a sudden confrontation between a police patrol and a guerrilla squad. The squad commander took position and opened fire. The police were so terror-stricken, they could not return the fire for some time. The squad withdrew, then only the police fired off a considerable number of rounds and went to the nearest palm-grove and drank toddy to the brim.

On October 5, 1950, near Ernapalli, in the forest, a military patrol was fired upon by a guerrilla squad from two different directions. One died. The inspector who was accompanying it got so frightened, he ran for his life, spoiling his clothes. The guerrillas attacked police patrols in Samudrala, killing six; near Hansanipalli killing three, near the Garjanapalli camp, and near Sivalingala killing one.

There were many surprise attacks on police patrols in different places. This made the police very demoralised. Once, when 500 police and military were mobilised to comb out a large number of villages in a forest area, they dared not stir out of the houses where they were stationed, during the whole night. The police tried their best to organise home guards and forced a large number of poor people to do night watch. The poor were on the side of the guerrillas, they used to help them, even while pretending to be on night watch. With the repeated guerrilla actions on the police, the home guard organisation also collapsed.

This process was hastened with the guerrillas liquidating notorious landlords and informers like the manager of Keshava Rao's estate in Govindapuram, the manager of the Potaram Maktedar and the two agents of the Vannajipet Deshmukh; Bucchi Reddi of Bongaralakunta who organised police raids; agents in Kondapaka, Venkatarampalli, Balarajupalli and Akkapalli; Narasimhareddy of Bharashampeta; Chandrareddi and Gangaram of Narsingapuram, etc.

Wherever Party organisers went, the people said, 'Give us food-grains, give us cattle, we are prepared to come with you to any length'. Youth were joining the squads. Twenty had already been recruited and 20 more were to be recruited in a few days.

People Seize Grain and Land

The enemy raids were intensified. But the people in search of food seized the landlords' grains or harvested and threshed the grains during nights, before daylight broke. During daytime, they were subjected to brutal beatings and torture by the police but at night they used to go 10–15 miles for seizure of grain. The foodgrains, groundnuts, pulses, tobacco and even preserved chutneys of the landlords of Sanugula, Nachupalli, Ramannapet, Marrimeda were seized in one month.

People cleared the forests and bushes and started cultivating waste lands. They cultivated 500 acres of such lands in Manala, 200 acres in Kondapuram,

Tumupalli; 100 acres in Totapalli; 150 acres in Janagama, 20–30 acres each in Vanapalli, Tatipalli, Ratna-Gongaravi, Bodlapalli and Konapuram. The Party distributed landlords' cattle as well.

The labourers got their wages for bringing down trees and fuel-cutting increased from 10 annas (62 paise) to Rs. 2.50 per day in the

villages of Ernapalli, Nachupalli, Govindaram, Surampeta, and Kodimala. In the villages bordering the forests, the poor people cut wood for fuel free and sold it and made their living.

In this mass upheaval, innumerable group and village meetings were held and the democratic tasks and policies of the Party were explained. During the Dusserah Puja holidays of 1950, it was decided to hoist the red flag in as many villages as possible. This Programme was carried out in a hundred villages. This was done by local and village squads and in some places under the very nose of the police.

In Rudrangi, where a Malabar Special Police camp was situated, there was the red flag fluttering on the flag-post as day broke. The policemen rose from their beds to see it. In Nimmapalli, the police tomtommed that no red flag hoisting would be permitted. But in half a dozen places, on the housetops, on tree tops, flags were hoisted. The police threatened the people for siding with the Communists and hoisting red flags. They asked how they could be responsible for this, when every batch of night watch people was accompanied by four policemen with rifles. Similarly, in Gollapalli, Padunagar, Nizamabad and Chimalapalli villages, where police camps were situated, red flags were fluttering proudly that day. In Sircilla, Vemulavada and in some other important towns, red flags were hoisted. In Malyala village, where the British hoisted their Union Jack after the end of the First World War on a high hillock called Phirangi Jhanda Hill, the Red Flag was flying on that day. This flag-hoisting on such a large scale showed the breadth and the organisational strength of the people's upsurge. The officers, the police and the landlords became tremendously dispirited.

The area committee, in its report to the state centre, summed up the reactions of various sections of the people and the results of this mass upsurge in the following terms:

Landlords: Police assurances that they would put down Communist 'atrocities' do not instill confidence in them. The majority of them are lying low at present. They are accepting the wage rates which the agricultural labourers demand. They assure us that they will not oppose the land distribution programme.

Rich Peasants: They gave up the idea of buying lands in the villages where the squads reached with their propaganda and activities. They remain neutral towards the activities of the squads. They also think that there is no alternative for them but to accept the Party's programme. The rich peasants in such places where the squads could not yet reach and take this message, have not yet given up hopes of grabbing land at cheaper rates. In such places, the squads have to

face the initial opposition of the rich peasants. Even in these places, their strength is, however, not considerable.

Middle Peasants: The middle peasants feel that they are liberated from the previous oppression and that they now have a guarantee against their lands and other properties being taken away forcibly by the oppressors. Hence, they show their ardent sympathy for the Party.

Poor Peasants: They have freedom as regards the rented lands in the struggle areas as the landlords have changed their former oppressive and tyrannical outlook. They refuse to pay oppressive rents to the landlords. They are coming forward everywhere to reoccupy the lands which were taken away illegally from them by the landlords. They not only stick to the rented lands but are also cultivating the *poramboke*, *banzar* lands in the struggle areas. They want to have close contacts with the Party and are ready to fight under the banner of the Party.

Agricultural Labourers: Since the big landlords and other oppressors fled from the villages, the agricultural labourers working on the landlords farms, have obtained full freedom and the farms, cattle, et cetera, belonging to such landlords are completely at the disposal of the agricultural labourers. Many of the landlords, before they fled to the towns, hid their belongings in the houses of their farm servants whom they considered to be very loyal. Now, all these things are at the disposal of such farm servants. The landlords who never used to pay wages in time or fully, are now paying them in advance, even 3 or 4 months in advance. The second crop (green-gram, etc.) grown in the landlords farms are freely enjoyed by the agricultural labourers. The Party could not yet organise separate committees for the agricultural labourers. Now, the Party is going to pay special attention to organising the agricultural labourers.

'Thus, the people's upsurge is enveloping all the peasants except a very few. The lands and crops of the landlords and other oppressors are now at the disposal of the people after these people's actions, since the oppressive landlords fled from the scene'.

'Even the Government taxes are not being collected in the struggle areas except in a very few places, even though the people were temporarily terror-stricken during the police raids. In other places, to which the movement did not extend, taxes could be collected with the help of the police'.

'There is a great desire among the people to get landlords' lands distributed. But this does not mean that they are ready for all odds and do not have any waverings'.

'All the old debts contracted by poor peasants and agricultural labourers were cancelled. Mortgaged articles were handed over to the persons who had mortgaged them. Mortgaged lands also were freed from such mortgages and returned to the owners'.

'In the forest areas, the cooperative system of wood-cutting newly introduced by the Government came to a standstill. The chowkidars and forest guards who harass and extract bribes from the people were driven away from the forests.

The chowkidars who still persist in their former atrocities even after they are warned by the squads, are being dealt severely. One such chowkidar of Narsinghapuram was shot dead; the chowkidar of Vannajipet was severely beaten. With these actions, the chowkidars everywhere, except a few, became terrified and broke off their connection with the police and dared not continue their anti-people activities'.

The system of auctioning the fodder in the forests is also stopped. Now the people freely graze their cattle in the forests. Forest-produce like *ippapuvvu*, honey, beedi leaves (*tuniki aku*), et cetera, are being freely enjoyed by the forest people.

'Such are the material results that have occurred from the agrarian upsurge and people's militant actions led by the guerrilla squads in Karimnagar district in the recent months'.

Extension off the Movement into Adilabad District

This is the northernmost district of Telangana, north of the Godavari River. It is a mountainous district of dense forests, with the plains on the banks of the Godavari in the south, and Penganga, a tributary of the Godavari in the north. The district lies between these two rivers. The hilly and forest region is the abode of the *gond* people, also of the *kolamalu* and *naikpodu* people. Big landlords dominated the plain areas. To give a few examples only, Narspur Samasthanam Raja lording over 50,000–100,000 acres; Manḍamarri Madhava Rao, vatandar of 20 villages, owning 10,000 acres; Pusuluri family, owners of 10—20,000 acres. There were other big Velama and Reddy landlords, who later on, became dominant Congress leaders as well.

The Union Government took every precaution to prevent the Telangana movement spreading into this district and the district becoming an impregnable forest and hilly base for the whole of the northern Telangana districts of Medak, Nizamabad and Karimnagar, with its eastern flank on the Godavari River providing a contiguous and deep forest belt link with the old struggle areas of Warangal and Nalgonda districts. It kept strong vigil on all ferry boats all along the length of the River Godavari. It tried its best to organise home guards in all key villages and carried on an extensive malicious propaganda campaign against the Communists.

But the guerrilla squads operating in Warangal district extended to Manthena, easternmost taluka of Karimnagar district, crossed the River Godavari into Adilabad district and spread the movement to Chennur taluka, linking it with the Bellampalli mining area and further north to Siripur. They had to do this to have greater mobility and protection from the continuous pressure of the police and military on the old areas of the movement. Similarly, the Karimnagar guerrilla squads, spreading to Nizamabad to the west, had also crossed the Godavari seeking a deep forest base in Adilabad district.

It was in these conditions that the squad, with the help of the Bellampalli

cadre, in October 1950, raided Rampuram village and liquidated the hated *patwari*, destroyed the village records, hoisted the red flag and distributed scores of bags of foodgrains to the people. But later, 12 militants were arrested due to lack of experience and lack of sufficient precautions.

The squads that crossed from the western parts of Karimnagar, in the beginning of January 1951, conducted *jaitrayatras*, victory marches or propaganda marches in 55 villages of the southern four talukas of Adilabad district. They hoisted red flags, destroyed village officials' records, and warned that no information should be sent to higher authorities.

Foodgrains to the extent of 100 bags were seized from Government and landlords' godowns in Dasturabad village and Ellapuram, and distributed among 500 people in these villages and the neighbouring hamlets.

In Masaipeta, the big landlord, Narasimha Reddy, ran away and from his godown 50 bags were distributed among the people. His son accepted the terms of the squads and wanted to live in peace with the people. The squad did not do any harm to him and the people appreciated the differentiation which the guerrillas made between the hated oppressor, the father, and his son who wanted to be friendly with the people. Later, Narasimha Reddy brought the police, organised beatings, got 10 persons arrested, ransacked many a house to recover his grain, but could get only a small portion back. His son opposed all these actions of his father and helped the people to the possible extent. In two other villages also, the police attacked the people on a large scale, arrested 35 more persons, but could recover only a small portion of the grains distributed.

Earlier, a few years ago, the *gonds* had risen in revolt and had been brutally suppressed but the Government, to pacify them, had given a certain amount of waste lands for cultivation to a selected few. The Government had also recruited some *patels* and *patwaris* from among the tribal people themselves. So, the squads at first did not burn the village records or force the village officials to resign their jobs, or even hoist the red flag. They concentrated on political explanation and tried to dispel the fears about the Communists instilled by the mischievous propaganda of the Government. The squads gradually gained the confidence of the tribal people. The organisers and guerrillas were stressing the need for mobilising, to clear certain areas in the forest and reclaim them for cultivation, and to seize the lands from the illegal possession of the landlords, against illegal exactions, against heavy rents, usurious interest rates, and against the many grievances regarding the forest produce.

The squads in this district had to contend against the propaganda carried on by the landlords that the Communists cut the throats of people, and citing the mistaken action of a squad in Jagtial taluka, in Karimnagar district, a few months before, which had killed 7 persons, three of them landlords, another four ordinary people. The squad had acted on false reports without finding out what was what, without campaigning on people's demands and establishing proper

contacts among the villagers, and without mobilising them. Consequently the squad had to run away from that taluka. The disastrous effects were felt not only in that district but also in Adilabad district even after the passage of time of a few months. The squads had to continuously explain how they were opposed only to the big landlords. The rich peasants, traders or any other section or even individuals from the big, landlords families who did not indulge in cruelties against the people, would not come to any harm from the guerrillas. It was this patient explanatory campaign, and the squad action of coming to terms with the son of the landlord of Masaipata as he was opposed to his father's anti-people actions, that ultimately converted these sections and helped them to overcome their fears and doubts. They came forward to live with the people and cooperate with the squads.

The guerrilla squads destroyed three bungalows in Bursaipet, a key village on the border of two talukas in the forest areas, which served as a good camp for the police. On another occasion the squad had to open fire on a police raiding party near Tallapet in Lakkisettipeta, in the Kadam Canal Project area, to escape its encirclement, seriously wounding two police personnel.

Even these actions galvanised the whole area within a month or two. The people were angry with the police *zulum*, cursed them and were not cowed down. They said, 'What has happened is nothing much. More is to come. These *badmash* (rascal) landlords must be punished. As the people of Ramajipeta killed their oppressors, similarly, we want to finish off our oppressors. Let one squad member be with us to guide, the rest we will do. Our squads must come again and destroy the bungalows of these land lords. Only once have they come, and that was quite some time back'. When the police tried to force them to do night watch, they cursed them and in many places refused. 'Are we to guard the houses of these robbers? We may die but we will not'. People in the Pembi and Mandapalli villages and the Dongagudem naiakpodu people were beaten black and blue, but they did not give out the whereabouts of the squads.

The landlords, with the starting of the guerrilla propaganda campaign, the grain distribution and burning of village records, packed off to the towns. Seeing this, the people became enthused. A *harijan* labourer, on his way to some village, seeing the red flag fluttering, exclaimed with joy: 'Our Party has come. The time has come that will end all our troubles. I will narrate all my tales of woe to the Party. When will the Party come to my village?' A shepherd told our comrades, 'With the Party coming into these areas, all the exactions and oppressions being indulged in by *doralu* (lords) have come to an end. They are all mortally afraid of you. Come to my village. I will show you good mountainous shelters and water springs'.

There used to be heated discussions as to who would win, those who came in the night or those that came during the day. The people came to the conclusion that the Communists who came in the night, would ultimately win. They had

already won a large kingdom. The people also spread stories of what they had heard or seen, how the police officials were shaking in fear, how the guns in their hands began shaking the moment the cry went out, 'The Communists have come', and ridiculing their cowardice.

Where our squads went and maintained some regular contacts with the villages, the people came for solution of all their problems, including their social and family problems. When our squads went to new villages in the course of the propaganda campaigns and approached the people for food, they said, 'What we eat, we will gladly give you, dry roti, fermented jowar gruel. Whatever we have, we will feed you with, for you are fighting for us'.

Thus the elemental upsurge of the people, awakening from age-old oppression, manifested itself in this district and in all the other new areas to which the movement was extended during those years.

But the Government started concentrating larger forces, establishing new police and military camps with larger contingents and began heavier combings and raids.

The Telangana movement was called off within a few months, in October 1951.

7

Movement in Cities and of the Working Class

We have already seen how our movement was weak in the towns, both in the working class and in the middle classes. Yet the impact of the Telangana movement on them was so great that general sympathies were all with it. Whatever cadre and contacts the Party had in the cities, especially in Hyderabad, Warangal and the mining areas, were of tremendous importance, and they helped the Telangana guerrilla movement in various ways. It was through these contacts and cadres, that the Party was able to purchase and supply to the guerrilla squads, at least to some extent, the writing and duplicating paper, medicines and other essential requirements. It had also been possible to purchase a very limited quantity of hidden arms and ammunition and supply them to the guerrillas. However many a time we were cheated, and had to pay an enormous price for them.

A limited number of hiding places and contact places were organised in the city to maintain links with the fighting areas and squads. But, again and again, under repeated raids and terrific torture, many places were blown up and quite a number of technical cadre were arrested. Most of them were tortured and some shot. All glory to those who did not squeal under the torture. A large number resisted for days, which enabled the Party organisation to break off all links known to the arrested persons and move to safer and newer places. It was made a general rule that once a comrade was arrested, it was taken that he would reveal some or more secrets, and the best technical rule to avoid danger was to cut off every link, give up every place which the arrested person knew of. That way the Party organisation saved itself from great disaster.

In the Andhra area, the towns being small, the police were able to keep an eye on every house rented during the previous 3 to 6 months, blow up many a hiding place, places of the underground cadre, and arrest them and shoot and kill them. So much so that ultimately, by 1950 middle, practically all district towns were vacated by the old cadre and they could get protection only in far-off cities in other states or in the forest areas alone.

But, coming to the actual movement and struggles of the working class and middle classes, we give below a meagre account of whatever was found in the records of that period.

Students Demonstrate Against Promotion of Nizam as Raj Pramukh

On January 26, 1950, the Nehru Government promoted the hated Nizam to the position of *Raj Pramukh*. The people of the state, who were fighting relentlessly to liquidate the rule of the Nizam, could not sleep over this promotion. In a number of places, students organized strikes and came out with black flags in demonstrations. In one or two places, there were clashes between the student demonstrators and the Congress police; other sections of the people very vehemently condemned the brutalities of the police and demonstrated their protest. The following is the list of a few such demonstrations:

In Warangal, 2,000 students came out on the streets demonstrating with black flags. The police tried to stop them, but the students boldly broke the police cordon and faced the lathi-charge of the Congress police. When the people protested they were also beaten. Student leaders were arrested and let off in distant forests.

Karimnagar Students Battle with Congress Police

In Karimnagar, on January 26, three hundred students went on strike and came out in a demonstration. The police lathi-charged the student demonstrators.

The Socialists had called a meeting to express their formal protest. A number of students attended the meeting. During the meeting, a Malabar Special Policeman provoked the students. The students taught him a good lesson. Getting furious at this, the police fired some rounds in the air and lathi-charged. The students faced the police boldly with stones and brickbats. Five student leaders were arrested and taken to an unknown place. The police raided the students' office and carried away books and files.

The whole population of the town emphatically condemned

the police lathi-charge on the students and the raid on their office. The students went on strike till January 31. The whole population of the town supported them.

On January 31, the Hyderabad city students expressed their protest against the police lathi-charge on Warangal students through posters and leaflets. Students of the Kachiguda High School went on strike and took out a procession. When the procession reached Sultan Bazar, the police stopped them. Five of the leaders were arrested, but the united resistance of the students secured their release.

Protesting against the police attack on Warangal students, students in Khammam, Bhongir, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Jagityala-Sultanabad, Peddapalli and Parkhala went on strike and brought out demonstrations.

Hyderabad Students Pledge to End Police Zulum

Kumarayya, a student cadre, was tortured and threatened with shooting. But he refused to bow down and reveal a single word except mentioning his father's

name and designation. His parents still do not know why he was shot dead. They could only say that he had been suspected of being a Communist. The names of our student cadre were not revealed and they continued to attend schools and colleges. The whole student front would have been shattered but for this comrade's determination.

On February 28, a mass meeting of students, workers and other citizens was held in Hyderabad. Speakers representing all shades of opinion—Communist, Socialist, and other progressive groups—spoke in the meeting and strongly condemned the Congress police *zulum*. They demanded immediate release of workers, peasants, students and youth workers and all other political prisoners.

Resolutions demanding reduction in hostel fees and bus charges, and supporting the demands of the students of the women's college were passed. Under the leadership of the All-Hyderabad Students' Union (AHSU), five hundred students of the women's college went on a three-day strike from March 7 to 10 against the system of detention in the selection examinations. The strikers daily assembled in the college premises, and speeches demanding the redress of their grievances and against the age-old zamindari-jagirdari rule were made.

Working Class Struggles

Bellampalli: Immediately after the 'police action', the miners and other people raided the *gadis* of the Hindu and Muslim merchants and other oppressors. The Indian army imposed a curfew and banned the flying of red flags. The military entered the houses in the working class quarters and molested both the Hindu and Muslim women. On September 25, 9,000 workers went on strike, took a procession to the management and demanded withdrawal of the army and punishment of the army and police personnel who had molested the women. They were forced to withdraw the army, but the police and home guards carried on their atrocities. Some of the underground Communist workers were arrested.

The Kothagudem mine workers went on strike for bonus at the end of November. Bellampalli workers (who were also under the same management) followed suit. Though certain concessions were announced, the workers were not satisfied. They again went on strike in May 1949, demanding proper implementation of bonus, supply of adequate rice ration and restoration of civil liberties. More militants were arrested during this strike also.

Though the impact of the guerrilla actions in Warangal and Nalgonda districts was felt and the workers were enthused to hear reports of the victories, the Party's influence and organisation were too weak to organise and lead the workers. The workers went into a number of struggles on economic demands, mostly spontaneously.

The special feature of these and other struggles was that the workers of one factory were coming to the aid of those in another factory; were staging political strikes against death sentences on Telangana comrades and supporting the Telangana

struggle. Road transport workers of Hyderabad city held a big meeting demanding the withdrawal of death sentences, condemning the Government policy against detenus and protesting against the murder of Comrade Ganapathi (Mallaya). They staged a one-hour protest strike on May 23. Municipal, PWD and oil mill workers also struck work on that day.

Retrenchment was going on on a large scale in various industries. Six hundred workers had just then been thrown out of jobs from the Kohinoor Glass Factory. This picture was common throughout the industrial belt.

In the Azamjahi Mills (Warangal), workers had been staging 'a-10-minutes-tools-down-strike' everyday from the last week of December, on their demands on minimum wages, bonus, dearness allowance, etc.

Bhumayya, leader of the Azamjahi workers in Warangal, had gone underground. His house was raided on the night of February 25, 1950. His parents, brother and his wife were severely beaten. Many a time this was repeated.

A strike in 22 mills under the leadership of the Socialists was in progress. That even the Socialists were forced to call a strike was a clear indicator of the discontent among the workers.

Workers under the Party's influence—municipal, textile (old and new mills), had also joined the strike.

Discontent Among Negos

With the import of high officials from the Indian Union, discontent crept into the Hindu officialdom in the state, because they were deprived of the promotions they would normally have got. Their slogan was: no dual administration. The State Congress and the daily press like *The Deccan Chronicle* were supporting this slogan. Retrenchment of Muslim officials in the name of inefficiency, no promotion for Hindu officials on the same pretext, and even demotion at times, employment of Union officials in new posts, all these were adding fuel to the fire. Despite numerous statements that Union officials had been brought into strengthen the administration, the action had become a new breeding ground for discontent. The Union officials entrenched in high posts and drawing thousands of rupees on the one hand, and discontented state officialdom on the other—this contradiction was crippling the state administration. This was proved by the fact that they were abusing each other and holding each other responsible for the failure of the suppression of the Telangana movement.

Food Problem

Criticism even from the landlords regarding levy collection, resulting in non-cooperation from that section (*Golconda Patrika* was full of such reports), compulsory and forced collection of levy from poorer sections—all these had contributed to the failure of the levy procurement. The outcome was the shooting up of prices of foodgrains in the city and other towns. From 3½ seers per rupee,

the price went up to 2½ seers a rupee. For some weeks there was no jowar ration at all. The food problem in Marathwada was still more serious.

The army rule intensified repression and perpetrated fascist atrocities but could not get any results. So new manoeuvres began. The Military Government of Maj-Gen. Chowdhury was replaced by a civilian administration with M. K. Vellodi, Secretary of the States Department, as its head.

Chowdhury said himself, "There is only a change in persons but not in the Government'. He further declared openly, 'Whosoever may be in the Government in the state, the problems they will be faced with are the same. They are Communists and food problems'. The press called for more cooperation than before with the Government; the leaders 'promised' but nobody dared boast of finishing off 'Communists' within 4 weeks or 6 weeks as had been done hitherto.

Congress Military Government runs Amuck–Police Action followed by Police Raj–Mounting Repression in the Metropolis

Eleven months of 'Congress autocracy' in Hyderabad had torn to shreds the 'liberation mask' on its face, and revealed it as a ferocious dictatorship of the capitalist class, maintained at the point of bayonets.

Civil liberties had been completely crushed and no real democratic movement was allowed to function. So shaky was the Government that its police pounced upon any locality, institution or factory and resorted to indiscriminate arrests and terrorisation. The liberty of the individual, secrecy of correspondence, sanctity of educational institutions and respect for women—all were violated. Arrests without warrants, detention without trial and indiscriminate raids and searches were a common feature. People were arrested and beaten to pulp to extract information regarding the whereabouts of underground leaders. The printing machinery of the Communist Party and the trade unions, student and youth organisations was confiscated. Even women met with the same fate as men at the hands of these fiends.

During the six months, mid-February to mid-August, 1949, the repression on the democratic movement in the city of Hyderabad alone had been such that there were 52 people languishing in the various jails and a couple of dozen had warrants hanging over their heads. Among the arrested were leaders, organisers and active workers of the Communist Party, trade unionists, militant workers, students, youngmen, progressive writers, editors of papers, employees of the Government, and leaders, organisers and activists of the League of Democratic Youth (LDY) and the All-Hyderabad Students' Union (AHSU).

There were 20 trade union leaders and workers locked behind the prison bars, among whom were leaders of railway employees like P. R. Kokil, Bhooshanam and Kashinath Kulkarni; the entire executive of the Road Transport Department (RTD) Employees' Union like Raghavendra Rao, John, Alam, Akhtar Ali, Charles, and Ramulu (only Syed Qasim went underground); Linga Reddy,

leader of the Municipal Drainage employees and Assistant Secretary of the All-Hyderabad Trade Union Congress (AHTUC); Agamiah and Keshav Reddy, leaders of the City Textile workers and the former a member of the executive of the AHTUC; Rajiah, the popular workers' leader in the city, and Bhooshanam, a prominent leader of the Allwyn Metal workers. They were all detenus.

Prominent student leaders like Vithal Kulkarni and Gangadhar Chitnis of the Osmania University, Ch. Hanumanta Rao, Iqbal Ahmad and others of the City College, P. Narsing Rao of the Nizam's College and D. M. Sankar Rao of the Medical College were all arrested. The entire Working Committee of the Hyderabad City Students' Union (affiliated to the AHSU) and all the leaders of the AHSU were either in jail or driven underground.

Mohammad Ali Razvi and Sreenivas, two Assistant Secretaries of the League of Democratic Youth (LDY), and almost all the prominent workers of the LDY such as Mazhar Hussain, Bhooshanam, Doraiswamy, Mallesham, Qasim Aziz and others, were arrested. The entire Working Committee of LDY was either behind prison bars or driven underground.

Sulaiman Arab, the popular progressive poet of Hyderabad, Ghouse Mohiuddin, the editor of the progressive weekly, *Savera*, and the treasurer of the Hyderabad Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and Rafi Ahmad, a Working Committee member of the PWA, had all been incarcerated behind prison bars. Culture was being threatened by the Government of that 'defender' of culture—Nehru.

Akhtar Hussain, editor of the popular daily *Payam,* and Razia Begum, a lecturer of Osmania University College for Women, were detained without trial.

Shankar Narayan and Venkateshwar Rao—young men from Secunderabad, the former an active member of the Hyderabad Subordinate Engineers' Association and the latter a railway employee, were arrested.

A teacher in a Government primary school was detained without trial under the faked charges of providing shelter to underground Communists.

Shamsuzzaman, an inspector in the Government Weights and Measures Department, and two young men, Shahab and Ghani, were arrested and kept in prison under the trumped-up charges of 'supplying arms to the Communists.'

So much did the Government respect the liberty of the individual that they were not even tried in the Government's courts.

Mid-September 1948, the people were in the streets celebrating their release from the *Razakar* terror. The Hindu-Muslim tension maintained at the point of *Razakar* bayonets, disappeared. The toiling people soon began to feel the pressure of the economic crisis and all their pent-up grievances began coming to the surface. And the urge to solve them through struggles began taking shape.

By the middle of December 1948, the 1600 municipal workers were on the streets, demanding a living wage, dearness allowance and permanency of service. With the red flag at their head, they marched through the various streets of the

city, roused the entire toiling people, braved lathi-charges, stormed the police head-quarters and secured the release of their arrested leader.

On the Lenin Day, again, the municipal workers were on strike rejecting the bogus concessions of the new rulers. Demonstrating through the streets of Hyderabad, they roused the entire working class, faced brutal lathi-charges, snatched away the policemen's lathis and retaliated in self-defence. Such was the upsurge initiated by the red-flag-led municipal workers that in January and early February alone, about 20,000 workers of the City Textiles, Allwyn Metal Works, Taj and Kohinoor Glass Works and the Asbestos Cement Works were on strike, and 80,000 workdays were lost. On one occasion, the entire city was paralysed for two days because the railway and RTD workers were on strike in protest against the lathi-charges on women collected around their hunger-striking leader.

It was against this background that the all-India railway general strike was brewing. The South Indian Railway workers voted for strike by an overwhelming majority. The RTD employees led by Syed Qasim, Raghavendra Rao and others had already shown their preparedness for battle by downing tools in protest against the military atrocities on the RTD employees, and for the second time, in sympathy with the municipal workers.

The bourgeoisie knew that if the railway strike materialised, it would set in motion the entire toiling masses and make their force irresistible. Down fell the axe. Aided and abetted by the then leadership of the Socialist Party and others, it launched an offensive. In the city of Hyderabad alone more than 50 leaders and workers of the railway and RTD employees were arrested, the leaders of the City Textile workers were picked up. The leaders of the LDY and AHSU were arrested and detained. Police were stationed in the railways and RTD workshop and depot. Such was the terror that in Lallaguda (railway work-shop area) even women drawing water at the tap were not allowed to talk about arrested relatives and were dispersed with lathi-charges. In RTD, an ordinary employee who walked into the boss's room to demand an explanation for the arrests, was just handed over to the police. This was the first major experience of the city's working class with the 'liberation Government'.

But repression could only provoke anger in the working class. In March 1947, the workers of the Praga Tools Corporation and the Iron and Steel Company went on strike despite the anti-strike stand of the Socialist leaders. In these two strikes alone, lasting for two months, over 30,000 workdays were lost. The workers faced brutal lathi-charges and arrests and evoked solidarity sentiments among the working people.

On the May Day, the entire city woke up to find posters demanding the end of the Military Government and the establishment in its place of a people's democratic government of workers, peasants and oppressed middle classes. In the evening a mass rally was organised. On May 16 again, posters and leaflets appeared, protesting against the death sentence on Ganapathy, and in the evening,

a mass rally was organised demanding India's withdrawal from the hangman's British Commonwealth.

On May 23, the city was studded with posters demanding the cancellation of death sentences on the Telangana heroes. In the evening, a mass rally was organised and a procession brought out shouting slogans,— 'Hands off Telangana'. Such was the protest movement led by the working class and supported by the students, progressive intellectuals and the toiling youth, and such was the agitation throughout India and the world that Nehru's Military Government had to beat a retreat and suspend the death sentences.

So much was the Government shaken by this democratic movement led by the working class and the flow of leaflets, posters, meetings and demonstrations that in its fright it launched its second offensive in early June. Rajiah, leader of the Allwyn Metal Works workers, who, during these struggles, had come up as a leader and spokesman of the toiling masses of the city, was arrested. Other arrests followed. Active trade union, LDY and student workers were picked up. Some of the RTD leaders who were released earlier, were arrested again. The *Payam* was banned for three months. Ghouse Mohiuddin, editor of Savera, was arrested. And the Government, as a spokesman of the police department boasted, attempted to 'paralyse the printing, propaganda and the underground machinery of the Communist Party' by resorting to indiscriminate arrests and terrorisation. A reign of terror was clamped down on the city. Houses were searched, reading rooms were ransacked and indiscriminate arrests were resorted to.

It was in this same period that Government employees were moving for a solution of their long-standing grievances. One thousand subordinate engineers observed a two-hour pen-down strike on May 10, 1949. The PWD staff went on strike and won cheap transport facilities. Through these struggles was revitalised the Federation of Hyderabad Government Employees Association

(FHGEA) led by Ratilal, their popular leader. The Government came down upon this section of our oppressed people with a heavy hand introducing repressive and restrictive rules and regulations, and issued an arrest warrant against Ratilal.

The protest movement against this repression began surging forward. The municipal, drainage and textile workers passed resolutions condemning it. The youth organised in the LDY, in the various localities, joined in this protest. The students added their own share of protest in the form of leaflets, posters and signature campaign. And in the teeth of repression, a protest rally was organised on July 7, 1949. To such an extent was the Government panicky that it arrested Qasim Aziz and Azmatullah on their way home from the rally. Chitnis, a leader of the AHSU, was picked up from his residence at Sitaphalmandi.

Such was the Government's madness that the police arrested Dawood Sharif, an employee of the Railway Press, when he went to the police headquarters merely to enquire about the whereabouts of his brother Qasim Aziz. The repression continued with full swing, and one morning was staged what the bourgeoisie's

own Orient Press reported as 'the biggest haul of intellectuals' in the city. Akhtar Hussain, editor of *Payam*, his three brothers, his brother-in-law, his sister Razia Begum, a lecturer in the Women's College and a lecturer of the Nizam's College were arrested.

The barbarity of the police could be gauged from the fact that it even went to arrest Akhtar Hussain's brother-in-law, Aziz Ahmed lying on his death-bed (he died within a week of this incident), just because they had discovered in their search a 'list' of the workers of the LDY which included his name.

The students of the City College and the Chaderghat College went into protest action against these arrests. The AHSU organised a protest meeting of the students. This was enough. One morning the police rushed into the City College and arrested some student leaders. The students of the Chaderghat College went into action twice against the high-handedness of the autocratic Principal. The police on receiving information from a 'Socialist' student, arrested Moazzum Hussain. Angry students stormed the police station and secured the release of their leader. On knowing from the police itself as to who was its informant they taught that 'Socialist' disruptor and police agent the lesson of his life.

The workers of the two spinning and weaving mills of the city went into many strike actions—big and small, departmental and general, economic and political, making up a total loss of not less than 8,000 workdays.

Came August 1949. The police rushed into the City College to effect the arrest of active workers of the AHSU.

Five worker leaders of the two textile mills (including a woman, Adivamma) were arrested on the very eve of the 'Independence Day' in August. Venkatesham, a Secretary of the Hyderabad Spinning and Weaving Company Workers' Union and Adivamma, a member of its Working Committee, were severely beaten in order to extract information about the movements of the underground leaders and the working of the printing and propaganda machinery of the Party. Venkatesham was unable to walk straight for three days following the beating. Narayan, another leader from the same factory, was kept in custody for two days and beaten so brutally that he became unconscious. He had serious pain in the lumbar region ever since. The Acting President of the Hyderabad Spinning and Weaving Workers' Union was similarly harassed for 12 hours in police custody.

The police had taken to harassing the relations of the underground leaders of the Communist Party and arresting anyone to extract information. Jaffar Hassan, an employee of the Government audit department and the Assistant Secretary of the FHGEA, was taken into custody and harassed with questions whether he had connections with Ratilal and the Communist Party. Pillay, a student of Nizam's College, was kept in custody for 12 hours to extract information about the underground leaders of the Communist Party, and particularly about Ch. Rajeshwar Rao, Secretary of the AHSU, and Basithullah Baig, Secretary of its Hyderabad unit. Nauratan Lal, a City Civil Magistrate, was kept in custody for 12 hours and harassed with questions, under a charge that he had helped the Communists

in securing arms, for the simple reason that he was the elder brother of Amulak Ram, Secretary of the LDY.

Torture of young men inside the hitlerite jails to extract information had reached unprecedented heights. Shamsuzzaman was brutally flogged in Gulbarga jail. Rangachari, a Communist from the city and an artist of renown, was arrested in Chilkalaguda along with the Nalgonda Communist and kisan leader, Raj Reddy, and a woman relative of the latter. The woman was subjected to beastly torture to give out information and the real name of the arrested Communists. Rangachari was tied to a ladder and brutally beaten for three days continuously, asking him as to how the Communist Party got arms. During that period, he was given no food. Then again he was beaten and tortured for one full week, but in vain. The barbarity of the police had reached such a stage that it pulled out all the cart-drivers and tonga-drivers of the locality and beat them to enquire about the movements of some Telangana leaders, who, they thought, were staying in the city.

Such was the terror of the police state established after the 'police action'.

8

Struggle Inside Jails

The struggle conducted inside the jails during the period of the Telangana struggle was indeed historic and was a part and parcel of the struggle outside. If only 12,000 were arrested during the struggle against the Nizam, as many as 50,000 were arrested during the military regime of the Union Government.

The space in sub-jails, district jails and central jails was not enough, despite the fact that the jails were over-crowded to six times their capacity. For instance, as many as 900 prisoners were kept in the Nalgonda jail, the capacity of which was not more than 100. So in places like Khammam, they put up electrified barbed wire fences in open places and kept thousands of Communists and other Telangana fighters thus enclosed. Special regiments were kept in charge of the jail establishment, which the authorities themselves nicknamed as the 'Khammam Cage'.

They were not ordinary jails; people were herded into them like cattle and sheep and men did not get facilities which even cattle got from their owners. They were not mere jails; they were concentration and torture camps.

The jail manuals of the feudal regime had no place for political prisoners. The military regime was much worse in that regard. There was no difference between those who were brought to jail and not yet convicted and those who were convicted. As such, prisoners had to fight for their honour and dignity as politicals.

Khammam Concentration Camp

After filling the ordinary jails beyond their capacity, they herded into the "Khammam Cage" about 2,000 prisoners. They put up tents which did not give protection either from the sun or from rain. The prisoners were victims of both. In the hot season, due to powerful hot winds, these tents collapsed, the poles fell on the

The food was indescribable. They gave just a handful of some kind of boiled millet; there was no rice or chapattis. There were no plates or pots, not even earthen ones. Food was served in the hands and some watery rasam (tamarind and pepper water) was poured over it. Water was rationed to one seer for each

prisoner. That was the water to drink and for use for all his daily needs. No question of a bath.

This led to dysentery of which 60 prisoners died in this jail alone.

There were no adequate latrine facilities. A few latrines were constructed with thin netting very near to the places they lived. With so few latrines, one could imagine how difficult it was for 2,000 prisoners to manage. Not enough men were kept to clean the latrines. They were cleaned only once or twice in a day. The result was unbearable stench right where one lived and slept. The night soil was dumped into huge pits, again dug inside the camp itself.

All this affected the health of many and some of them died. Even the dead bodies were cremated right near the camp.

All the prisoners demanded of the jail authorities to give them at least the facilities given to 'C' class prisoners—provide aluminium utensils for drinking and eating purposes, to supply digging instruments to enable them to dig drinking water wells and put up rain-proof and sun-proof tents for their living. Even asking all this was a crime. They spotted out some whom they thought important, took them aside and severely beat them up. Comrade Arutla Ramachandra Reddy, one of the prominent Sangham and Communist leaders of Bhuvangiri, was severely beaten with rifle-butts and kicked with nailed boots; some were taken to the empty goods wagons in the nearby railway station, beaten up there, knocked down to the ground unconscious and brought round and beaten again. Some died due to this torture. The prisoners did not give up their demands. Many times they went on hunger-strikes, raised a big uproar, shouted defiant slogans, 'Communist Party ki jai'. In return, they were threatened with shooting and with flame bombs. Lathi-charges were common. Yet, the prisoners did not give up their struggle.

After months of agitation, they gave some implements to dig wells and to make chilly paste *(chutney)* for mixing with their food.

Four months of this agitation and the hue and cry raised by people outside led to the transfer of all these prisoners to Gulbarga and Jalna and other jails outside Telangana. En route, all the prisoners raised militant slogans despite the threats of the army.

There were no interviews; no friends could visit them and give them any eatables. On the day they were being transferred to Gulbarga jail, thousands of people came from Khammam and other talukas with food packets, but the army did not allow them to come anywhere near the prisoners, let alone allow them to give the food packets. People became wild, went to the Congress office, threw the food on the faces of the Congressmen there and abused them in the choicest language at their command.

Inside Gulbarga Jail

In the Gulbarga jail, they were given only two bajra or jowar (millet) chapattis

which were full of sand and stones and were half-baked. They were made with rotten millet full of worms. The leafy vegetables given along with the *roties* could not be touched. Half of it was only grass and not vegetables. Even that was not properly boiled. The same was the case with the *dal*.

Staff especially trained in bestiality, was brought to run the camp. The Superintendent of the jail, Joshi, was tyranny personified. The Jailor was an Anglo-Indian drunkard and excelled the Superintendent in barbarism. The *Jamadar*, one Narayana Reddy, an ordinary sepoy in the Secunderabad jail, had been promoted to this post because of his special qualities of resorting to various barbarous methods in dealing with prisoners.

For days together, the prisoners went on hunger-strike, demanding at least 'C' class treatment, arrangements for prisoners to cook for themselves and provision of necessary vessels for the same. They were all collectively lathi-charged and then separated into small groups. They were particularly beaten on their necks. Some were kept for months in double *gunj* (chaining the hands and legs together).

They ultimately succeeded. A quarter seer of rice, the same amount of millet flour, vegetables and pulses were given and the prisoners were permitted to cook for themselves.

Jalna Jail

Thirtyfive military barracks near the water works in Jalna had been converted into a concentration camp. Four out of these were reserved for the military guarding the camp. The camp was surrounded with barbed wire and three rows of thorny creepers. Next to this was stationed the Special Armed Police.

The roofs of the prisoners' barracks completely gave way, but no notice was taken of this. Each barrack could hardly accommodate 40 persons but double the number were thrust into it. There were only two latrines and even these were not kept clean. The filth from the drains filled the air with a hellish stink.

As it was, there were too few water taps in the barracks, and added to this, half the number were not in working order. The rest were kept open only for a few hours in the morning and again in the evening. The result was horrible scarcity of water and the ensuing difficulties in bathing and washing clothes.

The food was atrocious as in other jails. Rotten, moth-eaten, absolutely uneatable jowar flour, rice containing sand, stone particles, paddy grain and insects. Even from this, half the quantity was robbed away by the jailors and the jail guards. The iron and zinc utensils supplied were rusted. Even patients were denied better food and milk.

This incommodious habitation, rotten food and extortion of heavy work by using violence, led to a dangerous deterioration in the health of the prisoners. Eighty per cent of the prisoners were down with one disease or the other. Some suffered from such serious diseases as T.B.

There was a jail 'hospital' for the sake of name with two doctors, one compounder, and two ward boys. The beatings and abuses of the jail police was there besides there was the bureaucratic behaviour of these doctors. They not only would not administer proper medical aid but would also resort to filthy abuses. There were only 6 beds while the patients needing hospitalisation were 60. These had to lie down on the floor. Even the meagre milk and fruit supplied by the jail authorities were pilfered by the hospital staff.

Such was the camp where 2,000 political prisoners were thrown together—young boys of 14 to old men of 80, Communists, kisan, trade union, student and youth leaders, ordinary kisans, workers and young men.

But the heroic prisoners were carrying on a relentless, glorious struggle against humiliating orders, inhuman conditions and brutal atrocities.

An autocratic order was issued banning the singing of the International. Up went the 2,000 voices in a rousing crescendo. The International was being sung in defiance of the order. A brutal lathi-charge was made but the singing of the International did not stop, could not be stopped. After that it was sung regularly in the jail.

Defying all restrictions, the prisoners observed the May Day. The air echoed with slogans, raised by these sons of the working class and the toiling peasantry and youth. A meeting was organised in Barrack No. 7.

The authorities, probably to justify the new partnership of the Indian bourgeoisie with the Nazi Nizam, wanted to celebrate his birthday. Angry prisoners answered, 'Let the rulers celebrate this, the mark of the new partnership, but we will not celebrate the hangman's birthday'.

Comrade Venkat Narsiah died for the simple reason that he was not given proper medical aid. May 6 was observed as protest day. Slogans were raised and a meeting held.

The prisoners, through heroic battles, were conceded news-papers and aluminium vessels instead of the old iron and zinc ones.

On May 19, the prisoners saw in the papers the news of the death sentence on the 8 Nalgonda heroes. Their anger knew no bounds. What followed was a glorious story of the prisoners' heroic battle and the black act of Nehru's officials, sent to 'exterminate the Communists' and save his new partner the Nizam.

The 2,000 prisoners asked the Superintendent to send a protest telegram to Nehru and the Military Governor. The callous refusal to meet this demand was followed by slogans and the prisoners gathered in a demonstration.

The Special Armed Police and the military were summoned and those fiends fell upon the prisoners, herded them into the barracks and resorted to such brutal lathi-charge that many including leaders like Linga Reddy, Raghavendra Rao, P.R. Kokil and others were severely injured. Linga Reddy and Raghavendra Rao remained unconscious the whole night and none of the injured were given even first aid.

After this event, the authorities withdrew newspapers and other facilities and turned the camp into a regular torture chamber. The armed constabulary was permanently stationed in the camp. Important comrades were handcuffed and heavy work was sought to be extracted from the prisoners.

On July 12, the detenus were asked to cut grass and dig pits. The prisoners refused to do the work and demanded better treatment as prisoners. The Special Armed Police was summoned and a wild lathi-charge was resorted to. Comrade Janardhan of the Nanded Textile Mills and Comrade Agamiah of the City Textiles received serious head injuries and were bed-ridden. Others including Raghavendra Rao, Aktar Ali, Ramulu and others of RTD, Keshava Reddy of City Textiles and the rest had their hands and legs fractured. The total number of injured reached the figure of 70. The leaders were handcuffed and isolated. The next day all the prisoners refused to take food and demanded that the leaders be brought back to the barracks.

The authorities were resorting not only to such beastly atrocities as were perpetrated by armed police but were also trying to create a special force of jail goondas. There were 32 such fiends.

This torture and these wild beatings were all according to a carefully hatched plan. The Superintendent himself told the prisoners that he had orders from the Government to break the Communists' bones and ribs so that they were unable to take part in any activity when they went out.

Such was the plan; such was the torture in the concentration camp erected by the 'Liberation Government' and such was the heroic struggle of the leaders of our toiling people.

Bhid Jail: Tick-Ticks

The same conditions existed in the Bhid jail (Marathwada area). So the same struggle, the same harassment and ultimately the same facilities were wrested. There was a speciality in torture in this jail. 'Tick-tick', a balance-like thing, was hung up and the prisoners were asked to get into the balance. They used Singapore canes soaked in oil to beat the prisoners, who were stripped naked. When they beat with it, they did not take off the cane suddenly, but slowly withdrew it, and this left a bleeding wound as if the skin was cut out with a knife. Then they took scissors and cut the skin that had peeled off and applied chilly powder. And they beat again on the same spot. Some prisoners died due to this savage treatment. The prisoners fought against this barbaric punishment as well, and the authorities were forced to give it up.

Hyderabad, Secunderabad Jails

The conditions of the prisoners even in the state capital jails were no better. The prisoners sent memoranda to the Government demanding that they be treated as 'A' and 'B' class prisoners, that they be given not iron vessels but aluminium

ones. Hunger-strikes, lathi-charges, breaking of heads, double-gunj followed. Some of them were imprisoned in small cells which were only two square yards in area, where the imprisoned persons could not even move about and in which they had to answer nature's calls as well. Only once in a day, were these cells cleaned. Here Communist leaders like Ella Reddy, progressive writers like Sulaiman, Aktar Hussain, the editor of *Payam,* and his sister, college lecturer Razia, and others were kept. Repeated struggles were launched for better facilities. Lathi-charges were ordered in which the leaders were the special targets.

This struggle, in the end, resulted in provision of some facilities and treatment of some as 'B' class prisoners and others as 'C' class.

Military Open Fire in Warangal Jail

Two thousand prisoners in the Warangal jail also conducted similar struggles. One day, a prisoner was beaten until he fell unconscious. This aroused the anger of other prisoners who rose like a wave, wrenched out the iron bars and broke open the small gates. They proceeded to the main gate. All officers and jail warders fled for their lives. The police and military were called for by phone. Before the main gate could be tampered with, the military came and opened fire, killing a number of people. A police constable, a number of convicts and other jail staff were also injured, indicating the indiscriminate manner in which firing took place. The prisoners then went back to the barracks.

Later, lathi-charges continued. Even in a single-gunj, as many as four prisoners were kept. After long drawn-out struggles, they had to concede the demands in this jail as well. Several other practices were also given up.

Lathi Charge on Women Detenus of Warangal Central Jail

The newly arrived Superintendent of Warangal jail stopped the usual issue of raw rations to the women detenus. Protesting against this action, 50 women detenus went on hunger-strike from March 15. On the 17th the Superintendent directed a lathi-charge on these women detenus and as a result of this, eight women detenus were seriously injured, among whom were Annapurnamma of Govindapuram, Thumma Narsamma of Sankeesa, B. Narsamma of Munagala, Kanthamma of Velidanda village. On the 18th, all the political prisoners went on a hunger-strike protesting against the brutal lathi-charges on their sisters. The Warangal Trade Union Congress appealed to democrats to condemn this bestial action and demanded a public enquiry to punish the guilty.

Comrade Rambayyam of Pindiprolu village who was brutally beaten in this lathi-charge, died in jail itself soon after.

Similar struggles were waged inside various other jails against similar conditions.

Other Problems of Prisoners

There were other problems from which the prisoners suffered, like the lack of

medical facilities. If medicines were asked for, the reply was, 'You are Communist demons. Why do you need medicines?' There were no facilities to write letters, or for interviews, or if they existed they were very formal. The prisoners were asked to do work as convicts. The high-handedness of warders was a story by itself. There were no newspapers or books.

Struggles were conducted inside jails against all these inconveniences as well. When the police and warders who committed excesses came alone inside the jail, shawls were thrown over their faces from behind (to avoid recognition of those who beat them), then beaten up and let off. This brought further repression, further lathi-charges, double-gunj, single-gunj, chaining of legs and hands and so on. Again there were struggles against this. Thus, it was a chain of struggles between the prisoners and the jail authorities.

These struggles, too, resulted in certain facilities asked for. They censured letters, erased portions which they considered political and passed on the rest of the letter.

Special Tribunals and Bogus Examinations

While thousands of Party workers and people were kept in prisons without any charges or enquiry, thousands of others were charged with various offences like dacoity, loot, arson and murder. Even those charged with various offences were not tried in ordinary courts, but only in special tribunals established under the military. Though on paper, the accused had the right to appoint their own lawyers, in actual practice, such a facility was denied to them, by clamping behind bars the progressive lawyers. If any other lawyer came forward to defend them, the Government threatened such lawyers with dire consequences.

Special mention has to be made here of Sri Manoharlal Saxena and a group of advocates in Hyderabad, and Sri Denial Latifi and Sri A. S. R. Chari and others during the later period who defended the cases in the High Court and the Supreme Court.

The enquiries and hearings were all a farce—cock and-bull stories given by police officers, the legal jacket given to it by the Public Prosecutors in long and dreary arguments in English, not a word of which was understandable to the accused.

If this itself was a farce, the stories of witnesses were bigger one. The witnesses were none else than the landlords and their henchmen or *goondas*. In fact, these had left the villages long before and they did not know what had happened in these villages, let alone having seen them. Yet, if they offered themselves as witnesses, it was only with a view to getting back their properties and to wreak vengeance on the people. Prosecution stories and defence by advocates appointed by the tribunals were always on the beaten track. These landlord witnesses shivered in their shoes at the very sight of the Communist workers of their area though they were protected by heavy guard. Without looking at their faces, the witnesses reeled off what they were asked to say.

Let alone lawyers or police or military authorities, even the judges normally did not allow the accused to cross-examine these witnesses.

Dozens of cases were foisted on one and the same person and not being able to put up a strong case, with only landlord and *goonda* witnesses, innocent people in the villages were beaten, tortured and were forced to tell lies from the witness box. But being innocent, illiterate and village people, they were not even able to pronounce the names of the accused, nor could they immediately identify the accused as told by the police. In case of such witnesses, the judge himself used to ask the police officials, 'It looks as if this witness is thirsty. Take him out, give him some water and bring him back...'. This was only a signal to the police official to take him out, beat him up and bring him back to the witness box. Whatever the witness said, what was recorded was what suited the prosecution story.

After such bogus hearings, tens of comrades were sentenced to life imprisonment; some to continuous imprisonment of 40 to 50 years.

Even young boys of 15 to 16 years were condemned to death and decades of imprisonment. Dina Lingayya, a boy of 14, was sentenced to 46 years' imprisonment. Yerrabothu Ramreddi, a 16-year-old boy, was condemned to death in 1950 by the court. He belongs to Appajipet village of Nalgonda taluka and comes from an ordinary peasant family. They foisted murder cases on this young boy and sentenced him to death. Before the judgement, the speech this young boy made resounded in the whole court like a testament. Yet, they passed the sentence. While his case was still being heard, an American woman correspondent interviewed the boy in prison with the permission of the military authorities. His age at that time was only 15 years. She took his life history, photo, and published it prominently in the American papers.

Democrats Help Defence

Democrats all over the world reacted sharply to the nazi methods of the trials and the death sentences being imposed, and expressed their strong disapproval.

The Government of India wanted to carry out the sentence; of death before the new Constitution of India came into being, but kept the decision secret.

They had decided to send 12 of the Telangana heroes to death. They are the famous 12 whose case was personally argued and defended by the late D. N. Pritt, the world-renowned British democratic barrister.

They decided to send five of them to the gallows on January 22, 1950, and seven on the 23rd. Maisayya was a 65-year old man. The jail authorities got the signatures of the condemned on January 9 in the Hyderabad Central Jail and transferred them to Secunderabad Jail where the death sentences were to be carried out.

There was only a 12-days respite. This news spread like wild-fire to all the prisoners in both the jails. It was a situation in which they were full of anger,

their blood boiling with revenge, their feelings were choked by the death sentences facing twelve of their near and dear comrades who had fought along with them, and yet they were all in a helpless position.

D. N. Pritt in London moved into action. Barristers like Danial Latifi and Manoharlal Saxena and Ganesh were informed about this decision. Bombay lawyers flew to Hyderabad on the 17th and immediately took up defence arrangements. They moved Mr. Vellodi and the High Court to stop the execution of the death sentences. Meanwhile, the news was flashed in the world press. The Hyderabad Government was flooded with telegrams from all over the country and the world, from democratic organisations and individuals. The Telangana Heroes' Defence Committee was constituted. One slogan was heard in those days: 'Stop the death sentences on the Telangana 12.' The Czechoslovakia Youth League, Hungarian Freedom Fighters' Federation, Hungarian Youth Association, and other democratic organisations of the People's Democracies, the 60-million-strong World Federation of Democratic Youth, the 80-million-strong World Federation of Trade Unions, the World Federation of Democratic Lawyers, all protested against these sentences. Paul Robeson, the world-renowned American singer, condemned the sentences in a specially held meeting in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

This wave of protests, requests, condemnations not only inside the country but all over the world put the Government of India in a tight corner. This had its limited success. The lawyers were informed by the Government that the execution of the death sentences was being postponed. This happened on the morning of the 21st and the comrades about to go to the gallows learnt of it on the 22nd. Their lives were saved. The death sentences were all commuted to life imprisonment.

Bogus trials were going on and long-term and short-term sentences and death sentences were being imposed. Many comrades were taken outside the jail and shot dead in forests and hillocks. They used to take them out on the pretext that they were being taken to the courts, but actually they took them to the forests and shot them. This happened in all jails.

Two of the most prominent among those who were shot dead in this fashion were Comrades Vedire Rajireddi (Huzurnagar) and Rangachari (Hyderabad). Rajireddi came from a landlord family, but wholeheartedly plunged into the work of the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party, far back in 1944 itself. Perhaps, the Government thought that it would be difficult to convict such leaders of the people, without incurring the wrath of the masses outside. This happened in 1950.

While the Government's repressive policy continued, simultaneously, the democratic movement and the effort of democrats to fight it was also gaining momentum. Lawyers went in appeal against all the death sentences to the Supreme Court, appeals to other courts to strike down the other sentences imposed, and other arrangements for defence in other pending cases were also made. Mr. D. N. Pritt from England appeared before the Hyderabad High Court in some

important cases. Any attempt at violence on the witnesses by the prosecution side was resented and condemned.

This countrywide agitation succeeded in converting all the death sentences into life sentences. Yet, the Party did not give up its effort to mobilise democratic opinion outside to get all Telangana comrades released.

After the withdrawal of the armed struggle, sustained agitation was carried on to get the Telangana prisoners out. People came to know the bogus character of these trials; false witnesses could not stand the test for long; the Congress party was defeated in the elections and the Communist Party came out with flying colours. As a result of all this, the Congress Government was isolated and the Party, taking advantage of this situation, utilised the Forum of the Assembly, the Parliament and outside, to conduct a huge campaign and agitation on the issue. Repeated representations were made to the Government by the Party leadership to waive all sentences and release all the prisoners. Ultimately, the Andhra Pradesh Government, while Sri Sanjiva Reddy was the Chief Minister, released the remaining 50 life prisoners, in batches, in 1958–1959.

Bogus Jail Scrutiny Committee

While on the one hand the Government was committing atrocities even on prisoners inside the four walls of the jails, it had announced a bogus Commission in 1950 to the scrutinise cases of prisoners and release the less dangerous. It was true that a committee was appointed, but it was composed of die-hard anti-Communists, landlords, Congressmen and Government officials. The task of this committee was certainly not to release the innocent.

However partisan the methods they adopted in conducting the trials, it was found that their charges could not be sustained and cases were being struck down. Moreover, it was realised that it was not an easy task to conduct cases against thousands and thousands of people. The movement outside for the release of prisoners was also gaining strength. The Government seeing the direction of the wind decided to appoint this Committee, with a view to divert the attention of the people.

Before releasing the prisoners, this committee made a herculean effort to force the prisoners to declare that they were not Communists. The tried to make fun of Communists by asking: 'What does a Communist look like?' But, they got a strong rebuff from the prisoners, when they shouted, 'Yes, we are Communists and we are innocent'. It was ironic that this. Committee appointed to release the innocent, started beating up such prisoners. Yet the prisoners did not give up resistance. Resistance had become part of their blood, whether living inside or outside the jails.

The release committee, headed by one Sri Ananthachari, accompanied by the Collector, military commander Nanjappa and others, went to the Gulbarga Jail in 1951 and asked everyone to fall in line, with their heads bent down. Sri

Ananthachari caught them by their hair and asked mockingly: 'What does a Communist look like?' One prisoner raised his head straight and replied in the form of a poem, the substance of which is given below:

A Communist is there among the toiling people,
He is there among the workers,
He is also there among the peasants.
He can also be seen among the very poor people-
A Communist is found among the famine-sufferers,
He can be found among the rich, too,
As also among the patriots;
He is there among Congressmen and Leaguers,
He is there in your shade, my shade.
Give up your dream about putting down Communists,
They are the children of Mother India,
Know this, old man Ananthachari.

The committee members, completely upset with this and feeling it an insult, beat up that particular prisoner, and sent him back to the barracks saying that there was no question of his release.

Any number of such instances can be cited. With revolutionary zeal, they fought till the end. If anyone out of fear, submitted his resignation or acted as an agent of the authorities against the prisoners, he was thrown out of the barracks, after a good thrashing. Even those who surrendered to the enemy outside were brought to the jail. But, most of them saw the indefatigable revolutionary courage of the prisoners, regretted their surrender, begged pardon from their comrades and stood the test when it came.

Amidst such struggles inside the jails, despite the limitations, political classes were organised. Literacy classes were also conducted and they developed their knowledge of other languages as well.

Revolutionary Propaganda

Those who were caught by the army, while withstanding the beating and torture, refusing to reveal any secret, at the same time, talked about politics with the ordinary sepoys when the top officials were not present in the camp. They explained to them the genesis of the Telangana movement, its growth and its aims. Along with this story in general, each prisoner told his own story, his class origin; how he was attracted to the Party, why he was fighting, and so on. This propaganda had its own influence on the soldiers. Even inside the jails, they did not give up this revolutionary work. While opposing the jail warders and other officials and even beating them up, they, at the same time, talked to them, as well as to other convicts about politics, and converted many of them to become sympathisers of the Communists.

Escape from Prisons

Though imprisoned between the four walls, prisoners were always thinking of what was happening outside and if only the opportunity was available, they were always thinking of getting back into the revolutionary atmosphere outside—and always trying for such opportunities.

Very high jail walls, a 24-hour guard by warders and other sepoys, locking up all barracks the whole night—these were not easily surmountable difficulties. Even if one could manage to reach outside, there were armed police beyond the jail walls and if they could somehow escape this danger, there were military camps all over, and the enemies of the people were active. It might mean their instant death. Yet, it did not deter them from making such attempts. It was their thirst for revolutionary action that made them think in such terms. The most famous break-out of jail was that of Comrade Nalla Narasimhalu (Senior) and Nandyala Sreenivas Reddy, two Communist leaders of the Nalgonda district.

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Women in the Telangana Movement

Women played an important role in the Telangana struggle. They actively participated in the land movement, in agricultural labour wage struggles, in seizure of landlords' grain, against the 'Briggs' Plan' of evacuating the Koya, Chenchu and Lambadi people from their hamlets in the forest areas, or from their scattered hamlets in the plains. They were with their husbands and brothers, fighting the *Razakars* and the Nizam police and later against the Congress *Razakars* and Nehru's armies and the police. They had joined the military and political squads and underwent all the difficulties and joys of life in the forests and hills and in the fields, in the rain and in the sun. They acted as couriers, as political agitators, and in new centres, as organisers of people's movements and mass organisations.

They were the worst victims of the brutal tortures and atrocities committed by the *Razakars*, the Nizam's and Nehru's police and military. They had to face molestation and rape, apart from beatings on a large scale. They had to see their babes and children tortured and killed before their very eyes. They had to see their beloved husbands or brothers hunted, arrested and killed. They had to suffer all this, remaining in their own houses and villages, looking after what was left behind, the very young and the very old, when their menfolk had had to flee the villages to escape the fury of the army and the police attacks, or had gone to join the fighters and the guerrillas in far-off secret places.

The story of their heroic and stubborn resistance in defence of their personal dignity, against molestation, torture and rape, is an inspiring one. Their awakening to new social equality, to a new moral and cultural life, and their stubborn fighting quality, give us a glimpse of that tremendous revolutionary spirit and energy that is smouldering in our economically and socially oppressed women-folk. If we only take a little trouble to enable it to emerge out of its old tradition-bound shell, and try to channel it in the proper revolutionary direction, what a mighty upheaval it will lead to.

Women Defend their Land

It was Chakali Ailamma, in Palakurti village, Jangaon taluka, who was the first,

with the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party, in bitterly fighting to retain her land and crop from being seized by the Visnur Deshmukh. She inspired her whole family, her sons and daughters to be with the Party throughout, through thick and thin. Her house had been the centre of the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party activities against the landlords. She fought not only for her personal case—this only symbolised and signalled the beginning of the mighty struggle of the Telangana peasant for land.

In Miryalagudem taluka, in Mukundapuram village, the *sahukar* had got Kumari Mattayya tortured to death after the Indian 'military police action' because he refused to give up the land he had recovered from this *sahukar*. His wife took up the challenge. She stuck to the land and refused to surrender. She was brutally raped by the police but still she refused. She roused the people to support her and succeeded in retaining the land. 'The land is mine'.

In Vadapalli centre, a Lambadi peasant was killed because he, too, refused to surrender the recovered land to the landlord. But his wife took his place and succeeded in cultivating that piece of land in spite of the Congress police terror.

In Kondrapolu village, another Lambadi peasant cultivating a two-acre wet-land plot, that too, a recovered piece, was done to death by the landlord Dattudu. Here again, his wife came forward and succeeded in defending the land and cultivating it.

In Silarumiagudem, Golla Muttayya was killed for not surrendering the piece of land he was cultivating, but his wife stepped in and continued the cultivation and did not allow the enemy to seize back the land.

In Moddulukunta, a Lambadi took possession of a piece of land from the landlord Ramakrishnamma who tried to seize it back with the help of the police after Nehru's army's intervention. The Lambadi was beaten to pulp and forced to leave his house end the farm. But his wife refused and persisted. She cultivated it and succeeded in getting the harvest to her home.

Veeraram, a Lambadi peasant, and his wife resisted their land being seized by the landlord's men and the police. The police trampled on the woman who was pregnant, and she died.

These are a few recorded cases I have found in the old Telangana files. Such cases might have run into scores or hundreds in the whole of fighting Telangana. But irrespective of how many such specially noted cases there may be, it was a fact that tens of thousands of women stood along with their menfolk in this struggle for land.

Women Fight for Wage-Increase

A great percentage of agricultural labourers are women. They are in very large numbers, perhaps as many as the men themselves, because they, too, have to earn if they are to get even one meal for their children and themselves. They cannot rely only on their men's earnings. As such, it is not surprising that we

had women participating in large numbers in all agricultural labour strikes, or in the seizure of grain from landlords' and *deshmukhs'* warehouses and *gadis*.

In the Kondrapalli centre, and other neighbouring centres, in a large number of villages, agricultural labourers went on strike for increase of their daily wages to four seers from the then existing 2 or 3 seers. In the demonstrations, women in large numbers participated, with flags in their hands. Ultimately, to force the landlords to come to a settlement, they had to raid and start seizing grain, with the women participating actively. The landlords were forced to concede the demands.

In the Godavari forest belt, in the struggle to increase wages for picking of beedi leaves, in which tens of thousands of women were employed, they were in the forefront.

Further, in the two centres of Pindiprolu and Illendu, women participated in the strike struggles of agricultural labourers that took place in 90 villages. Especially in 20 of these villages, they were in the forefront, and strikes were especially concerned with the wage and other rates of the women labourers. It was women who were in larger numbers and it was they who were in the leading positions in the strikes.

Against Police Repression and Attacks

Even in the Razakar and Nizam days, when the armed police were attacking the villages of Balemula, Patasuryapeta, Mallareddygudem, Devaruppala and in a number of other places, women were at the side of their men, handing them stones for their slings. Along with their menfolk, they faced brutal lathi-charges and firings. In the Mallareddygudem fight, a woman who was supplying stones standing by the side of her husband, was shot dead. (Here one recalls the name of Viyamma, who, leading the Gazullanka peasants defending the lanka lands against the Challapalli zamindar in Krishna district two years earlier, was brutally bayoneted and shot dead). Women resisted their menfolk being spirited away in lorries and demanded that they should accompany them and face all the consequences. The police could move only when they took the fighting women in the lorries along with their menfolk.

In the Vijayanagaram centre of Huzurnagar and in Miryalagudem taluka, after the Indian army and Congress rule was established, large numbers of men were caught and were being taken by the police. Women surrounded the lorries and did not allow them to proceed demanding that the men be set free. Repeated lathi-charges did not make the women flinch. So ultimately, the police had to leave the men free and go away.

In Gundala in the Godavari forest area, when the police raided a koya hamlet and caught hold of a number of men and were trying to take them away, women from 10 neighbouring hamlets rushed forth and surrounded the police, preventing them from proceeding further. The police opened fire and the women retaliated

with stones, hiding behind the trees, but refused to disperse till their menfolk were let off. The police had to yield ultimately.

In the Kattugudem koya hamlet, in Gundala area, in September 1950, the men and women, the whole village resisted the military atrocities and in that fight killed a subedar and three of his men and seized their guns. After this, when the military came in large force, the whole village had to take shelter in the deep forest and the heroic way the women lived through the ordeal, not even allowing their children to cry out, will always rouse admiration and be an example of the determination and stubbornness of which women are capable.

In the Rajaram centre, a man and a woman of a Lambadi *tanda* were taken to the camp, the police suspecting them of helping the guerrillas. They were made to stand up for days and nights without food and water. When they fell down, a little water was given, and as soon as they became conscious, were again made to stand up. Their legs became swollen. But even after this torture, both of them would have rather given up their lives than give any information about the guerrillas. The enemy finding it useless to further persecute them, let them off.

Wives of Village Panch Committee members of Chidirala (?) (Chintapalem) village were taken to the Chelakurta camp and were tortured when the police could not get at their husbands in spite of repeated raids. Their properties and cattle were looted. They were let off after some time with the warning that their fate would be worse and they would even be permanently jailed if their husbands did not surrender. When these women came out, they also joined their husbands in the active movement and went out of the reach of the police.

In this very village, a camp of 150 policemen was maintained, yet they could not get at the leaders. A young boy, son of a village committee member, was arrested and threatened and beaten, but though he was only 14 years old, he did not give in to the enemy and kept the prestige of the Party high.

It was a common feature in the whole fighting area, that women took extraordinary precautions to look after the guerrillas and squads, sheltering and billeting them in their houses and in a large number of cases, keeping night or day vigil while the guerrillas or leaders were sleeping or resting. The women fed guerrillas and the Party organisers at any time of the night or day with great care and affection. They took food and supplies to the guerrilla hideouts in the forests and hills and suffered horrible tortures and indignities when they were found out. They bore them oll in this great struggle.

I remember with all gratitude and humility the great affection and care with which I was looked after in so many houses, in so many villages, during those terrible days of terror of 1948-1951. A number of times, I found the womenfolk keeping watch for any sign of approaching danger from the police and enemy agents.

Once after a prolonged night walk, early in the morning at 3 a.m., I reached

the house of Comrade Patibandla Janakiramayya, situated on the outskirts of Veerullapadu, for rest and stay. He was not in the house, but his wife Hanumayamma was there; I was tired and slept. As I got up before day-break, I was taken aback to see her keeping guard, though she was well-advanced in pregnancy. Such affectionate care and vigilance from womenfolk was the common experience of many underground cadres at that time. This was an expression of their devotion to our people's cause; and the respect we evoked from them, as fighters for that noble aim.

Who can forget those glorious events, those inspiring stories of courage and suffering?

In the village of Bendalapadu, a peasant woman, Rajamma, was caught. She and her husband were tortured with red hot irons, her waist and hands were and looked branded as if she wore ornaments but not a single word did she utter about the squads. The charge was that she was taking food to the squads in the forests. She keeps her devotion to the Party and worked in all elections for the Party. I had an opportunity of meeting her years later, in 1961, and saw the couple's life and their modesty and deep devotion for the Party.

In Nereda, which was one of the strongest villages of the movement, which the DSP, Sreenivas, and Vellodi, the Special Administrator, threatened to burn down, once 70 women were beaten with tamarind birches. They were forced to wear pyjamas and chameleons were put into their private parts and the pyjamas tied up at the bottom. The reptile creatures started biting; the agony of the women was indescribable. Red chilly powder was also sprinkled into the wounds. For five months they were ill.

Another day, they did not allow mothers to give their babies breast feed and all the children were crying for milk.

Yet, the women were not cowed down.

It was in this village that once a squad leader was surrounded. The women promptly dressed him up as a girl just reaching puberty, and after the police and military left, escorted him to a safe place.

The womenfolk in the household of Comrades Vatsya and Bimla, in Vallabhapuram, Suryapet taluka, carefully kept their house as a secret shelter and for protection of guerrillas during the whole period of the Nizam-Razakar days and later for a long time during the Congress military terror rule. But later, when they were arrested and shot, the women continued to actively help the movement. Acchamma of Parsaipalli, Suryapet taluka, sheltered and looked after Comrade Anireddi Ramireddi, the zonal leader, and later area leader, of Suryapet taluka during all the years. When Comrade Anireddi Ramireddi died in the clash at Ramachandrapalli, heroically fighting the police, covering the escape of his colleagues in the squad, her grief was indescribable. She had looked after this brave comrade all these years, as if he had been her own son.

Lingamma, of Chilapakuntla village, Suryapet taluka, was a strong supporter of the Party. She was in the forefront in the struggle against the hated landlord Jannareddy Prataparedy of Errapadu, under whose domain her village also fell. She brought up her whole family as active fighters of the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party.

She had married her daughter off, long before the movement developed, to Sri Linga Reddy and encouraged and helped him to become a Communist worker. Later, he developed into a squad leader.

A number of times he fought Jannareddy's *goondas* and drove them out. Lingamma faced many such raids after the squads withdrew. But in the 1952 elections, Linga Reddy left the movement and made peace with Jannareddy. This brave woman did not allow her son-in-law to come to her house. She and her daughter mobilised the whole village people against his new supporter and got him defeated in the elections. Gradually, Linga Reddy saw the mistake of his ways, saw Jannareddi's cruel attacks on the village continuing and rejoined the people's forces. He fought Jannareddy's *goondas* and atoned for his mistakes. Then only did this brave woman allow him and her daughter to visit her home.

Some Sketches

Lachamma of Nadigadda village who was a washer-woman, was caught in a raid by the Indian military. She used to wash the clothes of the guerrilla squads and get supplies from across the river. She was tied to a tree branch, head downwards, naked, and was beaten with lathis and birches, to make her tell the whereabouts of Ramulamma; they failed to get a single word from her. She recovered from the torture with the medicines and care taken by the guerrilla squads and local Party supporters. A few days later when Ramulamma had to pass that way, Lacchamma who was washing clothes in a streamlet, saw her, rushed to her and embraced her in joy. Both wept for a long time. She took Ramulamma to her house, bathed her and fed her. The village people gathered round the house, told of the great suffering which Lacchamma had undergone and expressed their pride at having such a great brave woman as their co-villager. The whole of Telangana, the whole country, is proud of such heroines.

Jainabbi, of Rajaram village, used to take food and other supplies to the guerrillas headed by Comrades Challa Seetarami Reddi and Adireddi, who made the nearby hills their centre all through the *Nizam-Razakar* days. The Indian Union armies started their depredations on the village. In all the strong villages, military camps were established. Rajaram was also one such camp. But Jainabbi was not afraid. She continued her supplies, more care-fully planned, and with greater sagacity and daring. She was able to hide three guerrillas who got separated from the squad and was able to send them to the guerrilla supply centre. One day the military camp raided her house, caught her and started to beat and torture her. They told her, 'Tell us where Sitarami Reddy is and we will let you off'.

The reply was: 'I do not know anything'. The *jamedar* started trampling on her but she refused to reveal a word. She survived that torture and continued her help to the guerrillas all through the struggle. She had lost her husband, in her young age itself. Her younger brother and his two sons, worked as wage labourers and used to give her some help. She knew what poverty meant, and hence her devotion to the Party that was fighting for them.

In Proddutur area, the *jamedar* of the camp was notorious for his horrible atrocities in all neighbouring villages, Lakshmipuram, Kothagudem, Garlapadu, Govindapuram, Nereda, etc. A squad leader who was despatched to kill him, took shelter one night with a Muslim family which was a supporter of the Party and the guerrillas even during the Nizam days. The mother who had known him for long, welcomed and fed him even though it was already very late. She was happy to learn that he had come there to kill the *jamedar* and the notorious landlord agent, Seetayya. These two had got 7 persons shot dead in one day, as well as Ramachandra Reddy who was respected in the whole area. As the day advanced, they came to know that Krishnamurthy the courier of that squad leader was caught and was being tortured at the village centre. The squad leader sensed the danger coming, that if the courier cracked under torture, the whole family would be butchered. He decided to leave the house as it would be too dangerous for all. He explained and convinced the mother, and at an opportune moment, when he saw no one within sight, in the street, coolly left the house with the gun camouflaged, under his arm.

After a month, the same squad leader, taking shelter in the same house, was able to get the opportunity to kill the *jamedar* as well as Sitayya, the hated oppressor.

That was the way the women and men rose to face danger and death, fighting for the people, wreaking vengeance on the enemy, in those glorious Telangana days.

Hamu and **Mangili:** Lambadi West Tanda of Dharmapuram. Babu, the son of Visnur Deshmukh had raided and surrounded the villages, then started combing it for Hamu and his sons, and especially Comrade Thanu, the eldest of them, the Party and people's leader of that centre. After terrific torture, Visnur Babu and his men got hold of Hamu and Mangili, the parents of Thanu. The torture began. Mangili became the special target. In spite of the terrible suffering she had been undergoing, she went on cursing the hated Visnur Deshmukh gang and rousing the people to revolt and revenge.

Then five youths were separated, forced to arrange a burial pyre, and asked to reveal the whereabouts of Thanu but they shouted back, 'Shoot and kill, but we will never hand over a single guerrilla'. They were shot and fell down on the pyre and were burnt. One of them was Somla, brother of Thanu, and son of Hamu and Mangili, killed before the very eyes of his aged parents. Reddia, Bolaram, Chandru and Ramu were his four colleagues.

Again, within another two months, came another raid by Visnur Babu and his gang, again terrific torture and again Mangili was the special victim of those atrocities. Boda Gholia, Boda Taminiya, Jatraveth Dauda—all young men were shot.

Despite repeated raids, and repeated tortures, Mangili did not give in. Her four other sons were put in jails. Her daughters-in-law and grandchildren were subjected to indignities and beatings. She did not break down, but was the source of inspiration and resistance for all these villages. After the Union armies entered, Babu was killed and the people were avenged. But the Union Congress armies were able to capture Thanu and shot him dead. Janardhan, the grandson of Mangili, was arrested along with another guerrilla hero, Komarayya. Komarayya was shot; Janardhan escaped and carried on his work underground all through the struggle days.

In 1951, Mangili had become very old, but she and her sons (who were released after serving in jail for 2 to 3 years) and grandchildren were all upholding the party banner, and inspiring people all around.

In Nereda, it was the family of Venkayya, Anantayya and Seetayya, their womenfolk, wives and sisters, Rosamma, Lachhamma, Nancharamma who saved the guerrilla squad commander from the very jaws of death. The village was being combed and Venkayya, in whose house he was taking shelter, was tortured, every inch of his body a bleeding wound, with his whole skin scarred. The doctors had to bandage the whole body with cotton. Venkayya's family of Nereda is a party family, rendering all-in support to the Party.

Mallikamba, the wife of Paladugu Brahmayya of Suddepalli village, Khammam district, was another instance of one who underwent a lot of suffering but did not flinch from her continued support to the squads and organisers. Her husband had passed away ten years before the Telangana struggle had begun. She had to maintain 6 children. When the *Razakars* were raiding the village, she sent word to Comrade Macha Veerayya's squad, which counter-attacked the *Razakars* and forced them to flee, leaving behind all their loot. Many a time her house was raided by *Razakars*, but worse was to happen under the Indian army raids. Her eldest son Venkateswar used to work in the squads. He was arrested in Vijayawada, where he went to purchase medicines for the squad, and was tortured in the Munagala camp, and finally put in the Khammam Cage. She herself was arrested and kept in custody for four days. Her crops were destroyed, yet she kept on making her house a shelter and stopping-place for hunted comrades.

Erramma married her daughter Anasuya to Comrade Medaramatla Seetharamayya, a guerrilla and party leader. She was living in Rangapuram village (Huzurnagar taluka), with her old mother Rangamma and her younger daughter. Her brother, Raghavayya, was also a supporter of the Party.

During the *Razakar* days, her house was raided and destroyed, and her fields were laid waste. Her old mother got depressed but held on. But after the *Razakars* had been suppressed, the Indian military forces took up the trail of blood and torture, Rangapuram and Erramma's family became the special target of the Indian military camps. One day, they raided the village, arrested the men and women, including Erramma, her mother and daughter Anasuya. They were taken to the nearby Kokkireni camp, threatened, insulted, beaten and their heads shaved. At first the barbers refused, but the military beat them and forced them to do it. The whole village was boiling with rage at the indignities that were being perpetrated on the family of their leaders, but they could not do anything then.

Erramma's family was forced to leave Rangapuram and started living in a temple hut in Vedadri, as wherever they went to live with some relative or other, those families also became victims of the Indian military and police raids and atrocities. The family kept up their courage. Comrade Seetharamayya used to keep up their morale. Even here in Vedadri village, they were not allowed to stay. Erramma took her younger daughter to some distant relative while the old grandma took Anasuya, wife of Comrade Seetharamayya, to Guntur. There Anasuya started working in a tobacco factory and with her meagre earnings they used to live in great privation and poverty, till the Telangana struggle was called off and they could return to their own village home. Comrade Seetharamayya had to continue to live underground for months afterwards as the warrants against him had not been withdrawn.

Rambayyamma, belonged to Pindiprolu village. Her husband died when she was very young, but she was a source of great help to the guerrilla squads who were in the hillocks around Pindiprolu, their base of operations against the *Nizam-Razakars* and deshmukhs. She used to mobilise womenfolk in a number of villages to help the movement. After a few months she was arrested and kept in the Warangal jail, where she spent 18 months. When 150 women prisoners, fighting against the lack of elementary facilities even for bathing, resorted to hunger-strike, the jail authorities brutally lathi-charged them. She led the resistance of the women and died due to the lathi-charge.

Venkamma was the wife of Rattayya, a rich peasant, in the village of Choppakatlavaripalem, on the borders of Nandigama taluka. She used to feed the organisers and the guerrilla squads; arranged for wounded members to be treated secretly in her house or near about. Their house became marked. When the Indian Congress armies entered, they arrested Rattayya and kept him in the Khammam Cage. Venkamma was made the target of molestation and rape. She could not stand the humiliation, so she took poison and killed herself.

What a large number of families had to undergo such sufferings and privations! Many of our cadres have such a background of suffering and heroism. The womenfolk, though not politically drawn into the movement and trained before, rose to great heights of human heroism and sacrifice in the course of the struggle.

'Women are giving full cooperation, keeping secrets and giving shelter to

comrades, and even old women are guarding us. During the re-planting season, women see us in the fields, talk to us, but keep it a secret. In Sirikonda area (Suryapet taluka) a woman recognised a prominent comrade and shouted his name in joy, but immediately other women put their hands on her mouth and silenced her. That news never spread.

'In Jayyaram area, even old women came forward to distribute leaflets after giving us shelter. Koya women are giving intensive help, and the menfolk have stopped putting any obstacles to their activity, as they used to do in the beginning. Women from Illendu went to join the squads, and agricultural labour women are in the forefront'.

'In Garla area, a girl of 15 was caught and questioned: 'Who is the man who is running away?' (He was an important comrade taking shelter in that house). She immediately replied that he was her husband, that he had become afraid seeing the police and so was running away. The police evidently did not believe her story, beat her and raped her, but she refused to give out any secrets and stuck to her story'.-(From a report to the underground centre).

In Govindapuram (Khammam taluka), the most hated oppressor Ummineni Ramayya was killed by the guerrillas. The police raided the village and brutally tortured the men and women, to get from them information as to who had sheltered the guerrillas. None gave out the information. Children between 4 and 12, were tempted with sweets, and when that failed they were, they were threatened, but even that did not work. None said a word about the guerrillas.

Rape of Women and Women's Fight Against it

During the Nizam days, in 1946-1947, the Nizam police and levy officials raided the villages of Akunur and Machireddipalli in Janagaon taluka. They brutally raped a dozen or more women. This incident was taken up even by Congress leaders as a major issue, as an insult to the honour of womenfolk, as a disgrace to national honour. Padmaja Naidu was in the forefront of that agitation and a huge wave of anger swept the whole country.

Similarly, early in 1943, in Madhya Pradesh, the police of the then British Government committed rape in the villages of Ashti and Chimur, in Sirvoncha taluka. There was a countrywide outburst of anger and agitation. Professor Bhansali (?) went on fast till an enquiry was ordered, after suspending the officials concerned.

But what the Indian army and special armed personnel that were sent to Telangana had done there in this respect, was nothing less than what we read of what a foreign army of occupation does in an occupied country. But the whole Indian press controlled by the Congress Government and all those 'great' defenders of women's honour did not raise even a feeble word against this monstrous crime that had become the pastime of the Congress police and army during all those three years.

Of the widespread character of rape and atrocities the women in Telangana

had to undergo during that time, one can get just a glimpse, from even the few reports that reached our underground headquarters, and from which I have given below a brief summary. I am also giving but a glimpse of the heroic resistance and the fight put up by women against this barbarity.

Fifty women in Munagala pargana and another 25 women in other talukas in Andhra areas, 21 in Neelayagudem (Huzurnagar-Miryalagudem), 15 women in Balapala (Manukota), 70 women in Seemalapadu, Illendu taluka, 80 women in Narmeta and Nanganur of Janagaon taluka, were raped. In Khanapuram (Pindiprolu) centre, the wife of the local organiser Comrade Imam was simply carried away by the military brutes. Similarly, in Nagaram (Suryapet taluka), a woman pointed out by the Congress agents, was carried away in a lorry, raped to death and thrown out on the road.

In Ragipadu (Suryapet taluka), a woman who had delivered only three days before, was raped. In Narigudem (Bhuvanagiri taluka) a woman who had delivered a day before, was raped. In Tenugunta, a woman in advanced pregnancy was raped. In Venapadu, of Bhuvanagiri taluka, and in Pushpapur of Khammam taluka, even girls of 10 years were raped.

Reports of women being raped by 5-10 military policemen at a time were innumerable. As far as our underground centres could get the information even during those days of terror, more than 100 women died of brutal rapes. In the first year itself, our reports showed more than a thousand women being raped. It will be no exaggeration to say that in all these three years of the police and military terror regime of the Congress rule, a few thousand women were raped and in every centre or village, where these police and military camps were established, mass rapings and forced prostitution were a common feature.

But the women and the people waged a continuous and bitter fight against this barbarous attack on women, beat back the police in many cases, and saved themselves from this torture and brutality. Here are a few accounts of such resistance—

After the encirclement raids, the police said that the Communist menace was over and started not only moving about freely, but also entered the villages to perpetrate other crimes. Four such soldiers from the Nawabpet village (Jangaon) camp went unarmed in civilian dress to Vaddicherla village and raped the women. The people of the village got wild; it was better to be dead than to suffer this indignity. Hundreds of people surrounded the house which the soldiers had entered. While two escaped, the other two were beaten to death.

Then, the villagers sent word to the camp that they had killed the Communists. Thinking that this was true, the military rushed to the village only to find that it was their soldiers that were dead. They beat up the people, but the people replied: What is the meaning in our living, when our dignity and honour are at stake? You ask us to catch hold of Communists, but you indulge in raping our women'. They boldly told them on their face that it was only because of

that they had killed the two soldiers. On the very same day, when the Military-General Nanjappa came to Jangaon, hundreds of people went to Jangaon and told him on his face:

"Yes, they raped our women and so we killed them".

In Proddutur village, the military raided, and after beating up villagers, shot dead four local militants. They tried to catch some women, but all the rest of the women of the village surrounded them and got their sisters released.

In Mallala village of Manukota, the military tried to drag a woman away from a crowd of women, but all the women stood their ground and resisted and forced the military to get out.

In Madarugudem, Miryalagudem taluka, the wife of the local organiser, Balakoti, was caught hold of by the military. She resisted and fought back, and escaped from their clutches.

In Jalalpuram, in December 1949, on armyman tried to rape a pregnant woman. She talked to him to get him into the room, then bolted it from outside and gathered a crowd of women. They started abusing the man in the choicest terms. The other soldiers came and took him away. Another soldier when attempting to take a woman was forcibly thrown down and she escaped.

In Bhattuvenkannabavi tanda, when the military tried to molest women, the men and women all resisted their efforts. They kept awake the whole night, all together in one place and did not give the military any chance to attack any woman.

In Tirumalagiri, when a military man tried to rape a carpenter's wife, the carpenter took his long wood chopper (*badisa*) and rushed at him. The soldier ran away for his life.

In Koyagudem, when two policemen entered their houses, the women took hold of their grain winnowing pans made of bamboo (*cheta*), and started beating them black and blue; by that time, the menfolk also gathered and chased them till they reached their police camp.

In Nerijarla village a policeman stripping himself naked before a crowd of women, caught hold of a woman. An old woman took a rice pounding rod (*rokali*) and chased him away. Two other policemen had to run away from the angry crowd of women.

In Chetlamuppuram, Manukota taluka, when 23 women were caught and were about to be put into the lorries to be taken to the camp with the purpose of molesting them, all the womenfolk of the village surrounded the lorries and forced them to let off the women.

In Pammi village of Khammam taluka, all the women of that village gathered and foiled an attempt at mass molestation and rape.

There were some cases of certain women who became mistresses of the police and became their informers. The guerrillas had to take certain action to safeguard the local militants and the Party there. The Party had given strict instructions

not to touch, attack or kill any women merely because their husbands or families were hated oppressors of the people and were deadly opposed to our Party and the movement. Even stray incidents when they accidentally happened, were made a big issue of propaganda by the enemy to rouse the feelings of the people against us, as they tried to do with the shooting down of the wife of the Acchampeta sub-inspector. Contrast this with the mass rapings and molestation of women indulged in by the armed personnel of the ruling classes.

In 1952, in Parliament, the Communist MPs from Andhra and Kerala exposed the brutal manner in which the police attempted to force the arrested militants to rape their own sisters and mothers in the police lock-ups.

Every democrat, every fighter for a decent and better life for the people, must envisage what to expect from the maddened ruling classes, the landlords and the monopolists, and from the Government, when their power is challenged. Even now, during 1970–1971, what the armed police of the Indira Gandhi Government is doing in the Srikakulam agency of Andhra Pradesh, and in certain localities of West Bengal, only goes to prove how easily the ruling classes resort to raping of women, a most vicious way of torture and barbarity, so as to strike terror into the people. We should all be prepared to meet it, and train our womenfolk to defend themselves and fight back the cruel enemy.

Women in Gurerilla Squads, Secret Offices and Towns

We have seen how women, staying in their own villages, in their own houses, fought against the oppressors and the police and suffered immensely, but went on fighting. Many demanded to be taken into the guerrilla squads, to the forest areas, maybe partly under the pressure of the enemy attacks, as the only method of escape. The Party admitted only a very few women into the forest areas, even fewer in the guerrilla squads. Yet there were quite a number of women comrades in various jobs, both in the political and military fields, in both the forest and plain regions.

There is **Comrade Swarajyam**, sister of Comrade B. Nara-simhareddy, who has been active since 1945, even as a young girl in the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist movement. She is a good speaker with dash and understanding. She was in the fore-front in organising women and men in those glorious struggles. She had been an active wholetime functionary during the whole period of the *Nizam-Razakar* days, and later all the three years in the Godavari forest region. She was a zonal organiser and later an area committee member. She was the inspirer and leader of the Gundala centre koya people's resistance and fight. She has tremendous initiative and capacity to go among the agricultural labourers and the most oppressed sections of the people, mingle with them and move them, though she herself comes from *a* landlord family. She is one of our prominent leaders in Nalgonda district.

Her husband, Comrade V. Narasimha Reddy, is an Andhra Pradesh State Committee member.

There is **Comrade Ramulamma**. Comrade Ramulamma comes from Cherkupalli (Nalgonda). She joined the Party along with her husband in 1946.

Comrade Ramulamma's husband left the Party in 1948, because of certain weaknesses. But she remained in the Party serving the people.

During the anti-Nizam struggle she moved along with the guerrilla squads—she used to stitch red flags and present them to the squads. She had also undergone military training.

In the worst days of the Congress military raids in Huzurnagar area, she very skillfully acted as a courier to an important technical organiser and kept alive the links with the centre. This woman of guerrilla with great ability brought an important organiser who was in a dangerous situation, to the centre. Because of her ability and efficiency, she was promoted. She became secretary of the Party in a centre of Rajaram zone (Miryalagudem taluka). One day, she went to Tallapalli (Palanadu taluka) for some work. A group of rich peasants of that village succeeded in deceiving her and handed her over to the police. Although she had her revolver in her clothes, she could not use it and make good her escape, as she was not expecting any danger. On hearing the news of her arrest, hundreds of women rushed to see her. They listened to her as she gave a speech and were very much inspired. The multitude of women that met her and listened to her were abusing the Congress and the police.

After her release in 1951, she became an active worker in the taluka, participating in all political and mass activities. She married Comrade Adi Reddy, the guerrilla commander of the area, who was repeatedly sentenced to death in many cases, but was later released in 1959.

There is **Rangamma**, who had been an active guerrilla squad member and a political leader, handling a gun in Nallamala (Krishna) forest region. She was married after the struggle was withdrawn, to Comrade Narayana of Penchikaldinne, who has been one of our leading comrades in Huzurnagar area.

Tirupatamma, wife of Chintalapalem was auxiliary cell secretary. The village rich got her husband arrested, along with Ramulamma in the Palanadu taluka. She was also arrested with them, but was released a few days later. Her relatives were not prepared to give shelter to her. Immediately after her release the police again-started hunting for her. She came to the forest to us and requested that she be admitted into the squads. We told her to live in the villages for some time more. Some rowdy elements tried to dupe her but she escaped their trap. When our squad member, Nellikallu Ramulu, deserting the squad, went to her and told her that the Party had sent him to take her to Rangamma (a woman leader), who was taking shelter in Vijayawada, she accompanied him and crossed the Krishna river. But she found his behaviour strange and suspicious, and escaped and came back to the forest areas. This time she again reached the squad. But as none of the zonal committee comrades was within reach, she could not be taken in. During the summer days she wandered from village to village and ultimately

contacted the zone leaders and was recruited. She had initiative and was good at studies, and was allotted tasks in a political squad in Devarakonda area.

Savitramma was recruited by the Huzurnagar zone committee and was sent to the forest area. She came from a poor peasant family and was married in her childhood to a dunce, could not live with her husband and lived for two years in her mother's house. She helped the Party all through the Nizam's period. When the Indian army entered, she was put in jail twice and later released and sent to her husband's place. She escaped from that house, and after 5 days of search contacted the squads and got herself recruited. She had initiative, carried out the tasks allotted to her meticulously, and was intent on her studies. She was working as a courier of a squad commander. Her brothers and parents were all strong supporters of the Party. The police arrested all of them and put them in jail, demanding that she surrender. She did not vacillate. After some more period of testing, she was recruited to the Party. Once while carrying water to the centre she was caught by an armed patrol, but in spite of terrific torture did not reveal any secrets. If she had uttered a single word our party leader and the whole zonal centre would have been blown up.

There was **Narasamma**, 20 years of age, coming from a poor peasant family. She had joined the squads in 1950 and was admitted as a party member in April 1951. She was an active cadre with good initiative, tried to carry out the tasks allotted to her by the Party, and sought ways and means to accomplish them-successfully. She tried to explain things to the people in a simple and in her own way. She attracted the people and kept up their interest and respect. She had great confidence in the Party. She read a lot and made efforts to develop the cadre. Here are some of her observations in the meeting of the guerrillas and functionaries of her area:

'During the *Nizam-Razakar* period, we tried to do everything and did not develop people's initiative to do things on their own, though they were moving on a big scale. That habit and practice continued after the Union armies came and we justified it saying that the people could not move because of repression, so we must ourselves do the tasks even if the people did not participate. The new line points out this mistake'.

The squads of killed some individuals by mistake on the basis of certain reports, without checking them up.. The squads are asked now to concentrate more on destroying military personnel. But instead of our being in a position to ambush them, it is they who are ambushing us, moving day and night.

'We feel that with the amount of money that is allotted to us, we cannot get so many things. We hand over all we confiscate or collect to the Party. The Party must look after our absolute minimum requirements. They are not doing that'.

'You must coach cadres properly, even if it means a few more days' delay, so that they can go to the villages with a clear understanding. Especially you

must coach them as to how to escape the enemy. With regard to cadre protection, enough precaution and core is not being taken. You must give us books which we can understand. You must take more pains to find such material for us'.

'We women are still being looked upon with the old outlook, that we are inferior. If we commit any slip or mistake, our leaders come down very heavily on us. It becomes a subject of open gossip and scandal. We must be guided and improved and not derided. If we move a little freely, we are watched with suspicion'.

'Why have you not allowed any women to participate in actual guerrilla raids on the enemy?'

I have given this long extract just to give an idea of how the women cadre were feeling and developing.

Koya Women to the Fore

In Godavari forest area, a greater number of women, and especially koya women, had joined the squads and actively functioned. There were 9 women in guerrilla squads, 15 women as couriers, 2 women as second-in-charge of squads, 2 organisers and 10 other local squad members. Some of their names were: Nagamma, Papakka, Lachhakka, Ramakka, Pullakka, Badrakka, Adivamma and Narayanamma.

Here are some sketches of these koya women:

Venkatamma, a young koya girl was one day being chased by the military in its raid of a koya hamlet. As she was running desperately, the squad led by Jagannatham opened fire on the military that was pursuing her, repulsed it and saved her. She joined the squad, helped it in all its chores; she learned to shoot and participated in a number of actions against the police and military. She was a good shooter. She got promoted as second-in-command. In one daring ambush, she led one section of the squad from one side and Jagannatham another from the opposite side, encircled the patrol and four military personnel became casualties. The squad seized the arms and as the supporting military van reached the spot, they retreated safely. Gradually, they developed mutual affection and after long months of discussing the pros and cons, (because she was a koya woman whom 'her husband' had left long before she came of age and he was, Jagannatham, a man from the gowda community of the plains) overcoming the age-old suspicions of the tribal people towards the domineering plainsmen, they decided to marry and applied for Party permission. The Party gave permission and solemnised this marriage. Today, both are active in the people's movement. During the period of guerrilla life she also learnt to read and write and developed her political consciousness.

Lachhakka is the sister of Comrade Bhallu and Ramu, lambadi brothers of Pusalapilli village, Manukota taluka. Bhallu and Ramu had become active workers of the Party and the Andhra Mahasabha and developed as organisers. They enabled their *tanda* to resist evacuation under the 'Briggs plan', and finally when it was

forced to vacate, these two maintained regular contacts with it and got all necessary help for the guerrilla squads. Lachhakka was arrested and tortured, but she did not reveal any secrets. She escaped from the military camp one night, and after searching a lot she reached the headquarters of the Party, through the recommendations of her brothers. She proved her grit and determination. She not only carried out various chores in the guerrilla squads, but also worked hard at her studies and mastered reading. She was a disciplined courier, worker and organiser with full self-control. She married the squad commander, Veeraswamy, who was in charge of the protection of the Party Headquarters. Bhallu and Ramu were arrested immediately after the withdrawal of the Telangana struggle and were shot dead.

There was another (koya) couple **Papakka-Tirupatayya,** brave, resourceful and experienced scouts. They could easily mingle with the plains people and behave in such a way that nobody could distinguish them as tribals. They were the forward scouts in the whole Godavari forest region, over the whole of Warangal, Karimnagar and beyond Godavari in Adilabad and Bastar districts. They could carry a big load on their shoulders and heads, and walk miles and climb hills and hillocks easily. They could swim the Godavari in spate, with a dry log of wood to support them. The Government tried its best to get at them but failed.

Similarly, there were other Koya couples like Lakshmi-Sundarayya, Ramakka-Pullayya; Pullakka-Setti; Ademma-Narayana; Badrakka-Ailayya; Nagamma-Padmayya and Lachhakka-Ramulu, who worked and kept the red banner high through all the years of struggle, participating in squads, as couriers, scouts and in military actions against the enemy.

Padigapati Nagamma of Mellacheruvu, a poor peasant, had made her house a place of retreat for squad members. She used to regularly carry and supply food to the squads. One day she *was* caught, raped, brutally tortured for three days, shot and burnt alive in a hayrick. Throughout she bore up all the torture without giving out any secret about any guerrilla.

Budemma, a young koya girl of Bendalapadu, joined the squads and was in charge of a women's supply squad. Many times she was able to hoodwink the police and keep up the flow of supplies. One day she was caught, raped, tortured and shot dead in the Maddulapalli streamlet.

Koya **Lachhakka**, wife of Satyam, was the deputy leader of a guerrilla squad. After the police action, her squad was attacked by the Indian armed police near Maddulapalli. She fired at the enemy with her stengun and killed four police personnel. Two of her squad members were able to escape. She was also retreating before the advancing enemy, when her hair plait got caught in hanging thorny branches and she could not make good her escape. She died, hit by enemy bullets.

Apart from these women cadre in the forests and villages, in the towns there

were women comrades working in 'dens', i.e., shelter homes specially organised for our more stable functioning. They used to be our copyists, copying thousands of pages of reports, circulars, documents, correspondence, patiently, day and night, multiplying and despatching the material to various centres—always conscious that at any time their places might be raided, and they would be subjected to terrible atrocities. Not only copying, in some places these women comrades were in charge of gun and ammunition-running.

When the den keeper did not turn up in exact time, they were supposed to remove the 'line-clear' signal and hoist the danger signal. Three or four times, some of the important dens were blown up, but because of the prompt action taken by these women comrades, the damage did not spread.

Marriage and New Social Problems

In the plains, the old arranged marriages and sharp conflict in certain cases arising in the upper castes, where divorce and re-marriage were frowned upon and socially disapproved, posed certain problems before the Party, the Andhra Mahasabha and Panch Committees. In certain communities, divorces and re-marriages were allowed, but the new husband had to compensate the old one for the loss he had suffered. Cases of refusal of such compensation came before the Panch Committees and Party organisers. Further, in quite a number of cases the husbands demanded that their wives be restored to them, and were not satisfied with the customary compensation.

The Party and the Panch Committees were guided by the principles of equality of men and women, their right to choose their own partners and their right to get a divorce and to re-marry, if in spite of the best efforts, reconciliation had not been possible. At the same time, we did not encourage licence or anarchic sexual behaviour, even though we did not look at sex relations or lapses and mistakes from the ascetic angle or from the angle of sin. But before a decision was given, and implemented, it was necessary to explain to the persons concerned, as well as to the public, how the decision helped towards a cleaner and frank life. It contributed to a better development of the people's movement and of social relations. No decision was to be given which would put mass opinion against us.

Here is one incident that illustrates the way our Panch Committees tried to bring this new concept into practice.

In Cheerala village (Huzurnagar), the Panch Committee consisted of one agricultural labourer, one poor peasant and one middle peasant. A rich peasant married her daughter to another rich peasant boy in childhood itself. As the girl reached womanhood, her husband treated her very badly. She was fed up with him and loved an agricultural labourer youth and developed intimacy with him. Her relatives tried to force her to live with her husband, tempted her with jewels, good clothes, and even tried village quack remedies to get her to love her husband

again. Nothing worked. She openly declared that she would marry her lover and live with him. The case was brought before the village committee. The committee decided that she was free to do as she liked and granted divorce to her. She subsequently married the agricultural labourer.

This question of marriage, divorce and re-marriage had to be tackled, because the issues were posed among the general public in the course of the development, of the movement and in the course of the changing pattern of economic and social relations. It had also become an acute and urgent problem for many young girls whose husbands had lost their lives in the struggle. Our Party stressed the need for a new moral code; that it was not a matter of sin or disloyalty, but a good thing to let the girls to re-marry in order to live a normal life and be useful to the people's movement. They must choose proper partners, continue the traditions of their old partners and achieve their ideals. It was a delicate question—without wounding their sentiments and attachments, as time calmed down the pain of loss, to help them to gradually forge new attachments.

We succeeded in persuading a good number of girls to remarry and they are now leading a happy normal life, most of them sympathetic to the people's cause and to the Communist movement.

I will end this section, recalling an example of the greatest sacrifice any woman can ever make. A martyr's wife, let us call her 'Comrade Padma' with her small child, was in our under-ground apparatus. We encouraged her and she gradually developed an attachment to one of our capable organisers, who was then also part of our technical apparatus. Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and all of us encouraged them to marry. After a few months, the enemy combing became very intensive. We had to disband quite a lot of our apparatus and send a good chunk of our technical cadre to the forest-base and limit our city technical apparatus to an absolute minimum. She was soon to give birth to a child. Her brothers who were rich landlords, were not ready to take her or her new child to stay with them and face the ' social odium'. I sent her a painful suggestion, that if she was prepared to give up her child to someone else, completely incognito, in the hospital itself, her brothers would receive her, the Party would be relieved of a heavy responsibility and her husband could go to the forest. She consented. Her husband left for the forests. She gave up her new-born to a couple who were issueless, and she went to her brother's place.

After the Telangana movement was withdrawn, the couple lived a modest life, with a modest income. Her eldest son was not allowed to be with his mother, because his new guardians would deprive him of his father's rightful properties; her second son could not even pay visits to her because his new parents who reared him with affection, did not want to lose him, nor did Padma want to make her son develop any complex feeling against the mother who had left him as he was born, and against his new 'parents' who had reared him.

I had always nursed a feeling of guilt, after that suggestion of mine. Could I not have taken the mother and her two children to some other place where

Padma could have lived with her husband and children after his return? At that time, we were thinking of years of armed struggle, till we achieved final liberation. All who were capable went to the forests, and others were to settle in jobs and places to eke out new sources of living and do whatever they could for the cause of the Revolution.

But the Telangana armed struggle was withdrawn within one year after this. It was rankling in my heart, when I was seriously ill, lying in Osmania hospital in July, 1965, the Press gave out news that my condition was critical and the doctors were anxious. Many friends came to see me. One day, Padma came and greeted me. I felt relieved. I reminded the couple of my demand made fifteen years before.

Such are the great sacrifices the Telangana movement called for and the women of Telangana rose to the occasion. Comrade Padma is one such example.

10

Brief Sketches of Some of the Squad and Party Leaders: after the Entry of the Indian Army

Comrade Kondalreddi: Comrade Kondalreddi and Ravula Veerayya, while hiding in a big cave in a big stone hillock, were surrounded by militarymen in Nimmakallu, near Patasuryapet. They stationed themselves deeper into the cave, and knowing that in any case, they would fall into the hands of the enemy, sold their lives dearly, by killing as many of the military men as possible, before they themselves died. As two soldiers peeped into the cave, they were instantly killed with rifle and sten-gun firing. This frightened the soldiers. Fire spat from inside the cave whenever any soldier was found anywhere near the opening of the cave. The whole contingent of soldiers fired into the cave and got it back. Some more soldiers were killed. Only when the return fire had stopped did they gather enough courage to go inside the cave. There they found the two dead bodies, which they dragged out, along with a sten-gun and a rifle. Not a single round of ammunition was left. Even the enemy was amazed at the heroism of these two comrades.

Comrade Kondalreddi, who came from a middle peasant family of Isthalapuram village (Suryapet taluka), joined the Congress in 1947, during the merger movement. But he soon got disillusioned with the methods of Congressmen and within months, joined the Communist Party. He was successful in bringing along with him into the Communist Party, two Congress squads and a number of other people. He participated in many an action of the guerrilla squads, and during the struggle against the Nizam, was one of those who encircled the Errapadu and Atmakur police camps. After the entry of the Union forces also, he participated in many activities, especially in Nasimpet, where soldiers were waylaid. Twentyfive years in age, with a strong physique and cool courage, he proved to be a terror to the enemy made him and a beloved leader of the squad and the people.

Comrade Ravula Veerayya, who was killed along with Comrade Kondalreddi, was a sub-commander of the squad. Coming from a toddy-tapper's family of Epuru village (Suryapet taluka), Comrade Veerayya, at the early age of eighteen, had joined the village squad and later the guerrilla squad. He had participated in many actions including the attack on the Errapadu camp. It was in this action that he received bomb injuries. After an operation, he came back to the squad to die a hero's death along with his commander.

Comrade John: The military had encircled 40 villages of three talukas, Suryapet, Ramannapet and Nalgonda, herded all the menfolk from all these villages at Vardhamanukot and started torturing them. In this encirclement were caught squad commander, Comrade John, and another member of the squad, near the Arvapalli hillocks (near Suryapet taluka). They were brought to Vardhamanukot and shot dead, right before the people, for having refused to reveal secrets about the squads.

Comrade John hailed from an agricultural labourer's family of Jajireddigudem in Suryapet taluka. He joined the anti-Nizam struggle in 1947, and later the guerrilla squads. He was associated with such historical actions as Kotapadu, Nutanakallu, Tirumalagiri, et cetera, and had many heroic feats to his credit. In the raid on Tondlai camp, he dashed into the house of the village *sahukar* where the police were taking shelter and got a bullet wound in his thigh. Soon after he recovered he was back in his squads and into various actions in Errapadu, Atmakur, Kodakandle. Joining as on ordinary member in a squad, Comrade John soon shot up to the commander's post, by his bravery and service. He participated in many actions against the military of the Indian Union. John was much loved by the people. He gave his life, but did not reveal a single secret. Even today, people narrate many stories about the bravery of Comrade John.

It was the same with the other squad member, who was caught along with him, tortured and shot dead.

Comrade Machha Veerayya: Comrade Machha came from a small landlord family of Gokinepalli, Khammam taluka. Already an active Andhra Mahasabha worker he took a leading part in the people's struggles during 1943–1946, and became the leader of the area squad during 1947–1948. I had occasion to spend a day or two with him on my way to and from Union territory to the guerrilla area, in Pindiprolu area. He lived in the woods, among rocks and in the rain, along with his squad members. He encouraged sharp criticism of his failures from his squad members, who were far junior to him, some of them coming from the poorest and most down-trodden sections of the people of the same area. He admitted his mistakes before them and promised to improve. He won the respect and unbounded loyalty of his squad members and colleagues. He never left the danger zone and went on working among the people, unlike certain other district leaders like Ravella Janaki Ramayya, who left the area for Union territory, when the *Razakar* attacks were intensified, and did not return to the field in spite of repeated party instructions.

After the Indian army intervention, Comrade Machha Veerayya was organising his area, encouraging his people to fight on. One day, he and his squad were surrounded and he was captured by the military. He was tortured (a report goes to say that his eyes were gouged out), but he did not squeal. He and his companion, Comrade Krishnamurthy, were shot. His body was paraded in Khammam town and neighbouring villages, to frighten the people that if they dared to resist, the same fate would await them. People wept and gritted their

teeth in anger. Even now, after 20 years, he is remembered with veneration and deep sorrow.

Comrade Srinivaso Rao: News reached the military that the Gangavarapu Srinivasa Rao's squad was taking shelter in Kachirajugudem hillocks in Khammam taluka. The military encircled these hillocks, spread over a three-mile area. The very same night, using bright lights, they started the search. The squad was betrayed by one Dondeti Suri, a courier in whom Comrade Srinivasa Rao continued to have confidence, in spite of his comrades' warnings that he was indulging in anti-people activities.

The sentry of the squad immediately woke up the squad members. They looked round and found the military approaching them from all sides. Moreover, it was a moonlit night. They were considering what to do. Already, *a* batch of military was within reach. 'No good discussing and thinking. Fire. Do not get caught alive', was the command given by Commander Srinivasa Rao. Taking a sten-gun in his hand, he fired it in a circle. His colleagues followed suit. A number of soldiers fell dead and others were wounded. There were loud cries from the soldiers.

This brought other military to the same point. It was just impossible to run away in those hillocks. So taking positions behind one huge boulder or another, there was firing and counter-firing. The otherwise peaceful night erupted into thunder, waking up the far-off villages. People were anxiously enquiring as to what it was.

The squad's ammunition stocks were finished, the last bullet also being put to good use.

Rifles quieted down from the squad's side, but continued to roar from the enemy side. Until it was daybreak the soldiers did not dare to approach the spot. And when they did, all of the guerrillas were found dead, with their weapons still tightly gripped in their hands.

The military from Khammam took the dead bodies of the squad members and reached Venkatayapalem, from where Comrade Srinivasa Rao hailed. They forcibly gathered all the people and showed them the dead bodies. Young and old wept alike like children.

Comrade Srinivasa Rao belonged to a well-to-do landlord family. Passing his matriculation examination, he took an active part in the student movement. From 1945, he was associated with the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party and conducted many struggles against the landlords and deshmukhs.

He developed into one of the capable leaders of Khammam taluka. As a zonal organiser of tens of villages, he organised squads and made it impossible for the *Razakars* to step into those villages. He prepared the people to resist the military onslaughts and himself conducted many raids, inflicting heavy losses on the soldiers. The people of Venkatayapalem buried the martyr's body with full honours. A Martyr's Memorial stands in the spot today, and the anniversary of his death is observed every year.

Comrade Alwala Narasimha Reddy: Comrade Narasimha Reddy came from a small peasant family from Alwala village of Miryalagudem taluka of Nalgonda district. He became a most daring and capable guerrilla squad leader, a terror to the landlords, *patels* and *patwaris*, the oppressors of the people, but a beloved leader of the people. He stopped the collection of taxes and grazing fees all around; made successful raids on military lorries near the Ibrahimpatnam bridge, and in the village of Ellalamanda, a lightning raid on a military squad, forced them to flee. In Cherlakunta village, he opened fire on the military, killing three of them.

The Indian military authorities were hunting him. Once he was taking shelter among a herd of cattle, in the river bed of Dindi. Suspecting his presence, the military opened fire on the herd. Comrade Narasimha Reddy jumped on to the back of the fleeing cattle, reached the other shore, and scaling the hilly bank, escaped the hunt.

Two years later, in July 1951, when we happened to pass that very spot, the squad members accompanying me, proudly showed me that place and narrated the heroic exploits of Comrade Alwala Narasimha Reddy.

After this escape, he was taking shelter with certain contacts in the village of Teppalamadugu, whilst suffering from high fever. The military authorities came to know of this and surrounded the village. Brave Narasimha Reddy did not want to get caught in the house of friends and bring upon them the anger of the military. So he took his gun and went out of the village, took position and fired on the military. He was such a confident shooter that he kept them at bay. When he found his ammunition running out, he aimed his last bullet at himself, triggered it and died. The military approached him guardedly, after many volleys of firing at him, making sure that he was dead. The military commander saluted the brave leader at his heroic death and cremated him with military honours, before the weeping people.

In 1952, I paid a visit to this great hero's mother in Alwala village to pay my respects and convey our Party's condolences to her.

Comrade Vallabhaneni Seetaramayya: Comrade Seetaramayya and his squad were resting near a well in Kamblapalli village in Deverakonda taluka towards the end of December 1948. The people's enemy, Venkatereddi, brought the Gurkha military there, and the squad was surrounded. In the ensuing fight, Comrade Seetaramayya laid down his life.

Comrade Seetaramayya came from a middle peasant family, from Penchikaladinne village, and had studied up to 9th class. Even in his childhood, his sympathies were with the agricultural labourers and the farm servants. He fought his own father, and supported their strikes for higher wages. In Suryapet town, he participated actively in the struggles against blackmarketeers and corrupt officials, and won the respect and confidence of the students by actively leading their struggles against the headmaster's actions. Leaving school in the 1947 'Quit Schools' movement, he joined the Telangana people's movement and became one of its beloved leaders.

He managed the Party office set up in the Union enclave of Munagala and later took up the responsibility of political leader and squad commander of Ramadugu area of Miryalagudem. He enthused the people and got them to dig a canal from a tank to cultivate dry lands. When, under the pressure of military combings, he was forced to Devarakonda forest areas, within a short time there, he roused a number of villages to fight the local oppressors and won their love and confidence.

When he was surrounded in Kamblapalli village with his squad he asked his squad to break through and bore the brunt of the enemy fire. Wounded, he laid down quietly and when the enemy approached him, he released his grip on his hand grenade, killing a few more Gurkha soldiers, and along with them sacrificed his own life in the grenade explosion.

Comrade Pasam Rami Reddi: Comrade Pasam Rami Reddi came from a well-to-do rich peasant family of Kurraram village. He became a militant leader of the people, being the most experienced military leader of Bhuvanagiri area. He carried out many a successful raid on the *Razakar* and Nizam police camps during 1947–1948. When the Indian army entered, he led the people to liquidate many a *Razakar* camp in Bhuvanagiri taluka. He had surrounded one of the strongest of such camps of *Razakars* and gave them an ultimatum to surrender. The *Razakars* sent word submitting to the ultimatum. Rami Reddi's squads were disarming them, and taking them prisoners and Rami Reddi was supervising them. Suddenly some *Razakars*, who were hiding nearby, stealthily shot him dead. The people avenged the death of their leader. But one of the most capable military and political leaders of the whole area was no more there to lead the people in the critical situation that was developing after the Indian army intervention. The irreparable loss could not be overcome.

Comrade Ramanujachari: A central organiser of Bhongir taluka, Comrade Ramanujachari was sleeping alone in a field near the outskirts of Chirrakoduru village. Betrayed by enemies from the village, the military surrounded him while he was asleep. He was taken to a nearby rivulet and tortured to force information out of him. "You are devils and not men, but you cannot break me', he calmly said. Finding all their efforts fruitless, they bayoneted him and buried him, while still alive, in the sand. Next morning, the people went there, unearthed his body and gave him a martyr's funeral.

Comrade Kodanda Rami Reddy: Comrade Kodanda Rami Reddy, hailing from a wealthy family in Brahmanapalle village, Shirkey taluka (now Bhongir), was attracted to the service of the people. He participated in student activities and later joined the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party. He organised a mighty mass movement, conducted a number of anti-*deshmukh* struggles and was loved by one and all. He was popularly known as 'Peddanna' (elder brother) by the people.

He was a political leader and military (guerrilla) leader as well. He led attacks against the big *Razakar* camps in Indirala, Gokaram and inflicted heavy losses. He conducted the historic raid on the Gundrampalle Nizam police camp and

literally razed it to the ground, confiscating weapons from 100 *Razakars*. Similarly, he led many actions against the Union army.

Comrade Kodanda Rami Reddy was a fearless fighter and a terror to the enemy. As the leader of the Bhongir area committee, he organised both the mass movement as well as the guerrilla struggle. It was these qualities that attracted the attention of the Union army which was always on the hunt for this mighty leader of the people.

At last they succeeded in surrounding him while he was talking to the people and shot him dead. Comrade Gali Hanumayya who was with him at the time, took position, opened fire at the military and forced them to retreat. He saved the body of Comrade Kodanda Rami Reddy from falling into the hands of the enemy. The people and Comrade Hanumayya took the martyr's body in a huge procession and cremated it with great honours, amidst deep sorrow.

Comrades Hanumayya and Suryanarayana: The squad led by Comrade G. Hanumayya (Suryapet taluka) and the squad led by Comrade Suryanarayana (Ramannapet taluka) had both drawn up a plan to attack a toddy lorry that went with military escort, and take possession of their weapons. Near Pillaipalle, they took positions on both sides of the road. One of the members of the squad, attired in an ordinary peasant's dress, walked along the road and asked the lorry to stop. No sooner had if stopped than the other squad members in hiding came out and at the point of rifles, collected the weapons from the two soldiers in the lorry and took them away.

Taking the weapons, they reached the River Musi. But, on that very day, the military encircled the whole area and this squad was caught in the encirclement. They decided to break through and under the leadership of their commanders, all the squad members made a bid to escape. Comrade Hanumayya died on the spot, a bullet piercing his heart. Another comrade, Somireddi, also died in the fighting. Comrade Suryanarayana, who was wounded, fell down but the rifle was still in his hand. The soldiers who went near him, seeing the rifle, got frightened and shot him dead.

Thus, two squads were almost eliminated. Comrade Hanumayya hailed from an ordinary family in Suryapet taluka and was active from 1943 in the Andhra Mahasabha and the Party. Once the guerrilla squads were organised, he took the responsibilities of a commander, and conducted a number of raids both on the Nizam's forces and later against the Union Government soldiers, killing a large number of them. After encirclement raids, he retreated to Shirkey taluka. He died there a hero, in action.

Comrade Suryanarayana, who hailed from an ordinary family in Kothapalli village in Nalgonda taluka, worked for his livelihood in Vijayawada and Tenali hotels. Later he joined the British army. Discharged after the Second World War, he came back to the village. Soon he became a commander in the anti-Nizam struggle. After working in Bhongir and Nalgonda talukas, he laid down his life in the battle.

Comrades Kongara Atchayya of Brahmanapalle and Jerri Eagala Rami Reddy of Kolanupaka, in Bhuvanagiri taluka, were two other comrades who died in this fighting.

Comrade Padma Reddy: Comrade Padma Reddy was police the of village Sunshala. He resigned his post and joined the Andhra Mahasabha. Later, he joined the Party. He was arrested after the 'police action' and was kept in custody. But Pannala Lakshma Reddy, Pannala Narayana Reddy, Siddapurapu Enuguvaru, landlords, bribed the military and got him shot dead in June 1949.

Comrade Gabbeta Tirumala Reddy: Union soldiers caught hold of Comrade Tirumala Reddy in his own village Gabbeta (Jangaon taluka) on information given by an informer. After torture he was shot dead. Even during his student days, while studying for his matriculation examination in the Jangaon Mission High School, in 1946, he was responsible for the strengthening of the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party. Responding to the 'Quit College' movement in 1947, he went to the villages to build up the great movement. First as an organiser and later as a guerrilla commander, he undertook many responsibilities in the service of the people. The very name of Comrade Tirumala Reddy struck terror into the hearts of the enemies of the people. It was because he was such a terror that the military was so happy at his arrest.

Gloom spread all over, with the news of his death. A song about Comrade Tirumala Reddy is very popular even today, and his death anniversary is observed every year.

Comrade Rekula Laxmareddy: The congress CIDs came to know that Pandyala Raghavarao, Rekula Laxmareddy and three other comrades were in hiding in Kothapalli village (Warangal taluka). Sixty militarymen surrounded the houses. On hearing the approach of the military, the comrades immediately tried to escape. The military opened fire, wounding Comrade Laxmareddy in the leg. He was caught, as was also Pandyala Raghavarao. The other three could make good their escape. Both of them were brought to the Ghanapuram police station. Raghavarao was sent to jail, but Laxmareddy was tortured by Congressmen, the military and enemies of the people. He was done to death by crushing his testicles. A guider weapon also fell into the enemies hands.

Comrade Sitarama Rao: Zonal organiser. Comrade Ponugoti Sharama Rao, along with two other squad members, was resting in *a* forest near Pedda Tallagadda (Illendu taluka). This information reached the Kothapalli military camp. Immediately the military encircled them. Comrade Sitarama Rao and his followers took up positions and opened fire. Before long, they were mowed down by the bren-gun fire of the enemy.

(There is also another version of this story: Comrade Sitarama Rao, along with his companion, Comrade Sangham, was resting in Pocharam village of Manukota taluka. News reached the military through one of their agents. The military swooped on them and captured them. They were shot dead when they refused to reveal any secrets).

Born in a rich peasant family in Chandupatla village in Suryapet taluka, Comrade Sitarama Rao worked among the students from 1946 and came out of Warangal college in response to the 'Quit College' movement in 1947. He was a central organiser and squad commander in his own area. Before the 'police action', Comrade Sitarama Rao was associated with many actions including the lightning raid on the Mamillagudem camp, destruction of the road between Chandupatla and Kampadu villages, killing *Razakars* in Chivvemula, Kampadu and other places. He was a terror to the enemies, whose lands he had distributed among the people.

He was one of those who retreated to the forests immediately after the 'police action'. He soon took up the zonal organiser's responsibilities after he reached the forests.

It was a new area but that did not deter him. He said there were the same poor people everywhere to be defended and the same enemies to be taught a lesson. He moved whole villages into action and distributed the foodgrains of the landlords. New lands were brought into cultivation. Many an enemy of the people was suppressed. He took a leading part in confiscating a large amount of ammunition from the Illendu coal-mines' ammunition dump. He conducted lightning raids on the Korepalli and Kothapalli camps and in the end, he died fighting the enemy. His death was one of the big losses suffered by the Party during that period.

Comrade Anireddi Rami Reddy: Comrade Kami Reddy hailed from a landlord family of Ramannagudem, Suryapet taluka. Quitting college in 1947, at the call of the Party, he came into the movement. Three of his brothers were already in prominent positions in the Party. He took up the responsibilities of the zonal organiser in Jojireddigudem, and became very popular in the hundred villages or so in Suryapet, Nalgonda and Bhongir talukas, in which he worked. He organised the distribution of thousands of acres of land and thousands of cattle.

Comrade Rami Reddy was also the leader of the famous 'road destruction' movement in the Jajireddigudem area. In the course of this action the enemy killed kisan and agricultural labour youth numbering 12 in Bollampalli village, 18 in Kasarlapadu, 18 in Ramannagudem and 12 in Patharlapadu, and threw their dead bodies in the breaches made in the roads. Comrade Rami Reddy along with his guerrilla squad, ambushed and attacked the *Razakars* several times, and mobilised all the people. He completely destroyed a 13-mile stretch of road. It was the determination and revolutionary zeal of Comrade Rami Reddy that led to the success of this programme in that taluka.

When the Indian army entered the Hyderabad state, Comrade Rami Reddy's squad, along with other squads, encircled the *Razakars* at Phanigiri, forced them to surrender and seized their arms.

Comrade Rami Reddy started re-building the organisation to face the enemy attacks in the plain areas after the monsoon had set in. On August 2, 1950,

he and his companion, Yellaswamy, were at a well near Ramachandrapalli village. On the basis of information supplied by a betrayer, the enemy encircled them. Comrade Rami Reddy decided to break the cordon and escape. He opened fire with his sten-gun, injuring some among the enemy. But Comrade Rami Reddy and his companion laid down their lives, hit by the enemy's bullets.

Comrade Jagannadham: Party organiser, Comrade Jagannadham went into Nelampalli village (Manthena taluka) unarmed, believing the word of the local landlords but once he reached there, found that they had betrayed him. They over-powered him and handed him over to the military camp at Bollagudem, where he was tortured very badly for 3 days. He was tied to a tree, hung up in the air and beaten, but they could not extract from him even a single word. All this before the very eyes of the villagers. People were very depressed at the possible death of their leader and were a little apprehensive that he might betray some secrets. 'If I die, hundreds will be born, and they will see your end', and as the soldiers sent a bullet through his chest his last words were 'Communist Party Zindabad'.

Comrade Jagannadham was born in Singaram village, Suryapet taluka, in a poor peasant family. Participating in the anti-Nizam struggle, he developed step by step to the position of the assistant commander of a squad. He dealt heavy blows to the *Razakars* at Singaram, Pataralapadu, Annaram, Elkapalli and many other villages. After the 'police action', he was one of those who retreated to the forests. He gathered some tribal youth and constituted a squad and participated in the raids on Gangaram Road, in Lavvala and other villages.

He was given the responsibility of extending the movement to Manthena area, and worked as centre organiser of Bollagudem. He was loved by the people in the area, but before he could strengthen the movement, he was killed.

The horrible news of his death quickly reached the other squads. At ten in the night they donned military uniforms and reached Nelampalli village. There they woke up the Sethsindhi, sleeping in the village *chavdi* (office) and told him to call up everyone in the village, saying that the *Dora* (the big man) had come. The Sethsindhi thought it was really so and roused all the people. All the enemies of the people, particularly those who had betrayed Comrade Jagannandham, were in the front, shouting 'Jai Hind' and arrived at the *chavdi* with folded hands. After Jagannadham was caught, the military came everyday in protection of such betrayers and local landlords. These betrayers thought that the military had come in the same way that night also. The squad members asked: 'Who is the fellow who betrayed the Communist and handed him to us? We want to reward him'. A number of the betrayers came forward, claiming that it was he who played the most important part. The more important among these betrayers were shot, and the others beaten black and blue. After that the squad disappeared in no time.

As soon as this incident became known, the military came, surrounded the forest and scoured the whole area for the squads, but could not find any one. After this, the camp at Bollagudem was wound up, this event having proved

night marish for all the enemies in that area. From then onwards, the military stopped going round at night, and the number of raids on villages also came down.

Comrade Lingayya's Squad: The five-member squad of Comrade Lingayya, after bathing in the Godavari, was walking through the forest near Ellapuram. But having come to know that this squad used to pass through that road everyday, the military took up positions on both sides of the road. The squad was encircled and there was no way of escape for them. Still they lay down on the ground and opened fire. The enemy had the advantage and it did not prove difficult for them to take the lives of these five comrades, as well as their weapons, which included one rifle and three *barmaars*.

Born in a shepherd family in Chandupatla village of Suryapet taluka, Comrade Lingayya worked as a member of the local squad during the anti-Nizam struggle in 1947; later as a courier to Comrade Ponugoti Sitarama Rao, then as a member of a guerrilla squad, as an assistant commander and finally, as a commander. He joined the Party as an illiterate, but by the time he became a squad commander, he had not only learnt writing and reading, but was even able to maintain correspondence with higher committees. He was in the forefront in many actions that took place in and around Chandupatla village.

He retreated into the forests after the encirclement raids of the Union military. He also played an important part in the raids on the railway lines and sniping raids on the military at many places.

Comrade Lingayya took the responsibility of extending the movement into the Mangapeta area in Mulugu taluka. He recruited four tribal youth from that area and constituted a separate squad for himself, sending his old squad members to other areas, with new responsibilities. In Mangapeta, Eturunagaram area, he took up the cause of the tribal people, fought against the local landlords, mobilised the people, seized the properties and grains of these landlords and distributed them to the people. Many raids were conducted by him on the military that was passing between Mangapeta and Eturunagaram. He played a prominent part in the raid on the Allapalli military camp.

He died along with his squad members in the skirmish, and in great glory. This was however an irreparable loss to the Party in that area. Those who had betrayed their movement to the enemy were later killed by the other squads.

Vatsya and Bimla: They were from the lambadi people from Undragonda tanda of Vallabhapuram, Suryapet taluka. For years, both in the Razakar time and the Indian Union army time, they were doing courier work. Their homes were always a reserve shelter for leading cadres. Their wives and their whole families were fully cooperating and used to take extreme risks to help and shelter the cadres. They were arrested, tortured and shot dead by the Union Government authorities. Their wives have continued to support and work for the Party.

Comrade Soyam Gangulu: Comrade Soyam Gangulu came from a koya hamlet, Banzara, of less than 10 houses. Valorous and a good hunter, a very

good marksman, a good conversationalist, he could explain issues in simple terms to his people, and rouse them to fight against the oppressors. He was illiterate but learned to read. He submitted himself to the discipline of the Party and strove his best to overcome his mistakes and bad habits. Though he had a weakness for drink, he was a disciplined squad leader and tried his best to overcome it. Special care to train and help him was taken by the area leaders. He, too, developed special regard towards them.

He was brave and militarily a very capable tactician. Many a time he ambushed the enemy, having an uncanny intuition of smelling out enemy moves. Many a critical time, his cool-headed moves and prompt lightning actions, saved the leaders of the area.

Once, the son of the Aswaraopeta zamindar was captured by this squad. He released the son, saying that the Party's quarrel was with his father and not with him, as he had not done anything harmful to the people. He warned him not to follow his father's footsteps but to do something good for the people.

He was respected and loved by koya people and was called 'Tiger of the Koya People'. The Union authorities tried to hunt him down and capture him, but failed. But one day, in a place bordering West Godavari taluka, he was tempted with drinks by a woman and while sleeping, was betrayed and captured by the police. For a week, he was tortured and paraded throughout the koya area, to frighten them. He only used to say, 'I disobeyed my Party and hence fell a prisoner to the enemy. You are going to kill me. But I will not betray my Party and people. Victory will be ours'. Every bone of his body was crushed under continuous torture. Then he was shot dead.

A small memorial (*samadhi*) marks his burial place in his village. I went there and paid my homage to the brave martyr. I saw his son and mother. His villagers showed me a tall palm-tree and told me that the Union military had asked the villagers to climb it and get Palmyra fruit, and when they got up the tree, they were shot dead. The villagers of Soyem Gangulu, the 'Tiger of the Koyas', had records of sacrifice worthy of the memory of this great hero.

Comrade Kunja Muthyalu: Comrade Kunja Muthyalu was another koya comrade. Expert swimmer and excellent scout, with unparallelled courage, tenacity and determination, he used to cross the River Godavari in full floods. He was the vital link between different squads and the area leadership. It was on the basis of his scouting and accurate information that many a successful ambush and action were carried by the area squads.

Though the military established nearly 20 camps in the Palvancha area and in one particular place, 8 camps within a radius of 5 miles, our squads ambushed them in about 30–40 places and inflicted between 20–30 casualties. Only two of their camps were raided.

One day Comrade Muthyalu was on his way to some place. The *patel* of Gangaram getting an idea about this ambushed him with 10 policemen and his own *goonda* gang, and captured him. He was tortured but not a word came out of his mouth. If he had been a weak person, and squealed, with his extensive

knowledge of the area hideouts, tremendous damage would have been caused. But he, the great son of the koya people, steeled by the Communist movement, stood all the torture, sacrificed his life, but saved the Party, the movement and held the Red Banner high.

Kaka Bujji, another leader of the koyas, patel of 40 koya hamlets, who was also with the people's movement, was arrested and shot by the police.

When 10 years later, I had the occasion to go to the area, some of the old militants and people narrated their stories to me, vividly recalling the suffering they had to undergo in the hands of the Indian Union police and authorities in those days, and remembered their heroic leaders.

In this Palvancha-Burgampad area, after 1948 and before the end of 1951, when the 'Briggs Plan' of evacuating them from the forest area, to starve out the squads, was enforced, 400–500 koya people were shot dead by the military.

Comrade B. Seshayya: Comrade B. Seshayya of Chirunomula village, Madhira taluka, was the squad leader and **Katta Ramakotayya**, also of the same village, was another important member of the squad. Their squad was surrounded by a military patrol in the Kondakodini stream in Yanambelli forests, Palvancha taluka. Comrade Seshayya fought back till the last bullet and this enabled nine members of their squad to escape the encirclement. But these two were captured and tortured for three days. But the enemy could not get anything from them. The military shot them dead. Bodepudi Punnayya of the same village was also shot dead by the enemy.

Repallewada Martyrs: Motarapu Ramachandrayya of Govindapuram village (Madhira taluka), was caught in the village and tortured to get secrets. He was thrown from a housetop after breaking his bones and killed. Eight comrades from different places were brought and shot dead near Govindapuram. Their names are **Yelamandala Chandrayya, Manda Achhayya** of Allapadu, **Gorremuchchu Ajarayya** and **Maddi Ramulu** of Vallapuram, Madhira taluka; and **Madupalli Veeraswami, Samineni Gopayya, Tammina Butchayya** of Repallewada, Khammam taluka, and **Kilaru Venkayya** of Nandigama taluka.

The people erected a memorial for all these comrades and pay homage to their sacred memory every year.

Comrade Dondeti Pullayya: As the number of raids increased in Chetlamupparam area, the attention of the enemy began to be concentrated on the area. They came to the conclusion that squads which had retreated from Suryapet area were taking shelter in this area, assembled hundreds of soldiers and organised thorough searches in the forests around. The people were tortured but they could not lay their hands on the squads. These raids continued for weeks.

Comrade Dondeti Pullayya, along with his courier, was caught in Singaram village. The military could get at him due to the betrayal by an enemy agent in the village. The two were tortured by piercing needles under their nails, in their organs and testicles but all was in vain. He told his torturers: 'Even if you kill me, our struggle will not stop. You came here to earn a few chips.

Beware. You will not see your families again. Your death is sure at the hands of our squads. For every one you take, you will be made to pay dearly'. The solders shot both of them.

Comrade Pullayya hailed from the Pindiprolu village in Manukota taluka. Coming from a middle peasant family, he completed his middle school education. He joined the Andhra Mahasabha in 1944 and later, in 1948, the Communist Party. Along with the comrades in his village, he strongly opposed the enemies of the village. He came forward to take up additional responsibilities during the anti-Nizam struggle in 1947. After Comrade Teegala Satyanarayana's squad was attacked by the *Razakar* armies and suffered losses, Comrade Pullayya came forward the as zonal organiser. He mobilised the Party and squads which were in a chaotic condition at that time. Though it was a new area to him, he could, in a short time, earn the love and affection of the people by standing with them in times of difficulties. He provided shelter to the squads that retreated from Suryapet taluka.

Pindiprolu was one of the famous villages in the anti-*Razakar* movement during 1946. Keeping in line with this he held the Party flag high, not letting a single secret out. His courier also died as a loyal soldier of the Party.

Comrade Gandra Chandrayya: Coming from Pedamupparam (Manukota taluka), Chandrayya developed into a capable squad leader and organiser. He and his squad were surrounded by the Union military in the Bodlada hillocks. Without hesitation, he took up position in a knee-deep streamlet and opened fire at the approaching enemy. The enemy was taken aback. The squad was able to break through and escape but Comrade Chandrayya was hit by a bullet which pierced his abdomen. He threw his rifle to the nearest squad member and asked him not to allow it to fall into the hands of the enemy. Saying this, he took his last breath.

Comrade Akkulu, squad member was killed in this action.

Comrade Mugali Venkatayya of Charlapalem, who was seriously injured, with both legs broken, was carried 30 miles, and offered careful treatment, and he survived.

Comrades Bashu and Ramulu: Guerrilla squads which were extending their movement to newer areas reached Gundregula area (Mulugu taluka) and scored many a victory during their struggle against the enemies. More than ten soldiers were killed on three occasions, when police from the Gundregula camp went to raid villages, and when they were sniped at, on their way back. Such was the terror struck in the hearts of the military that they stopped going even when they were told that the squad was sighted in a particular place.

Enthused by these victories, the squad decided to cross the Godavari River and extend into the Bastar forests. Despite the existence of the police camps all around, the squad crossed the river and established contacts with many villages on the other side. This news reached the military and they set up military outposts at every ghat on both sides, and kept up a 24-hour vigil. But the squads continued to cross the river over wooden planks during nights.

One night, a ten-member squad crossed the river and went to the other side, but very soon was met with rifle fire from a large military group. Being in thick forests, neither of them could see each other at a distance. Left with no alternative, the squad returned the fire. The plan of the military was to press the squad to retreat almost to the river bed, while at the same time, they spread round on the sides so that the squad would ultimately be cornered. In this encounter three comrades, Comrade Bashu, Comrade Ramulu (Chintalagudem) and another met their deaths. But it should be noted that it was the sacrifice of these tribal comrades that enabled seven other members to escape alive. These tribal comrades, living on the banks, were experts in boat-rowing and their loss was keenly felt by all comrades.

Comrades Ramu and **Bhallu:** Comrades Ramu and Bhallu were carrying on election propaganda in January 1952 in Manukota taluka when they were killed by the army near Komatipalli village. They were brothers belonging to the banjara tribe of Pusalapalle village of Manukota taluka. The whole family was ground down under the repressive rule of Jannareddi Pratapareddy. This made them join the Communist Party. First they started working locally and later joined the regular guerrilla squads in 1950. Along with them, they brought their sister, Lachhakka, and Comrade Ramu brought his wife into the squads. They did a lot of service for the Party through the squads.

Comrade Ramu was a commander, and Comrade Bhallu was his assistant commander. Like Bhima and Arjuna in the Mahabharat, they together killed many enemy soldiers. They participated in the raids in Kakaravai area in Narsampet taluka, in Kanchalapalle area in Manukota taluka and inflicted casualties among enemy soldiers who were coming and going in lorries to repair roads. They took political responsibilities as well, in 1951, in Chetlamupparam and Pusalapalle areas, and served the people there. People used to call them Rama and Laxmana.

They had particularly endeared themselves to the banjara tribe people. Though illiterate and backward, they were loved not only by their tribe but by people of all creeds. They were only 25 and 22 years old when they were shot dead, in January 1952, long after the Telangana struggle was withdrawn.

Comrade Nalla Narasimhalu (Junior): Under Comrade Nalla Narasimhalu's leadership, a ten-member guerrilla squad was in the hamlet of Dammanapet, when the military with a force of 40, went there on information supplied by an informer and surrounded them. Due to the carelessness of the sentry, the military were not noticed till they came very near and fired. Immediately the squad fired back. Their leader, Nalla Narasimhalu, opened fire with his guider (a small sub-machine gun). Six of the Nizam's militarymen died on the spot and some more were injured. The military was taken aback at this blow. It was getting dark. The military took the ones dead and wounded and fled. Nalla Narasimhalu had a bullet wound, but he kept his grip on his guider all the while. The squad got scattered. Only two members remained with him. They took him to a shelter in Dammannapet hamlet and leaving him there, went and informed the squad of Comrade Gabbeta Tirumala Reddy, which was some distance away.

Comrade Narasimhalu was propped up behind a boulder, feeling thirsty and he slowly came down to the fields to drink water. When the peasants saw him, they took him to another safe place. The military, getting to know of this, came early in the morning and took him away, abused him, shot him, but the bullet, missing the mark, hit him at the side of the neck and he fell down with blood streaming from the wound. The military thinking him to be dead, went away. Just at that time, Gabeta's squad arrived there and took him away to a safe place, where he was given good medical treatment by the Party, after which he recovered fully and took his place in the battle-field once more. In 1952, while going on propaganda work during the general elections, he was shot dead by the military. Thus that immortal hero, born in a weaver's family in Outhapuram village, worked for the people and tried to destroy their enemy, and gave the last drop of his blood for that cause.

Comrade Basaviah: Comrade Basaviah belonged to a family which migrated from Guntur district and settled down in the Sayireddipalle village of Narsampet taluka, after purchasing land there. He came to the Party in the anti-Nizam struggle in 1947. Working as an organiser in Nekkonda area, he mobilised people against the landlords of Kallada. He formed squads in Redlavada and Topenapalli and other places and drove away the *Razakars* from there.

In 1950 he became a zonal organiser. The enemies of the people in Timmampet tricked him and handed him over to the military. He was taken round the villages, tortured before the people at every place, but he did not reveal any secret; on the other hand, he exhorted people everywhere to rise and attack the Congress Government. After a fortnight's torture, he was shot dead.

Despite all the protection given to such enemies of the people, the guerrillas went in military uniform and killed those who had betrayed Comrade Basaviah.

Comrade Devasani Venkatayya: While Comrade Devasani Venkatayya was working underground in the plains area, he was caught by the military at Vadlakonda village (Jangaon taluka), because of the betrayal by landlords. He was beaten with iron rods until his skin ruptured and blood came out. Chilly powder was sprinkled in the wounds. He was taken to a great height and thrown down on the ground. They danced over his body with military boots on. After he became unconscious, he was taken to the Bachchannapet camp. He died en route.

Comrade Venkatayya came from a poor family in Vadlakonda village and served the people through the Andhra Mahasabha from 1945. He came as a wholetimer into the Party in the 1946 anti-Nizam struggle and functioned as a centre organiser. In his own areas, he scored many a victory against the landlords. During the encirclement raids, he lost contact with the Party and went to Sholapur, but soon came back to his work spot. Serving the people, he met a martyr's death.

Comrades Samuel and Ailayya: About thirtyfive members of the guerrilla

squads and organisers gathered in Vadlakonda hillocks to hold discussions about future methods of action.

On receipt of this information through the enemy, 150 soldiers surrounded the hillocks. The sentry spotting the military, woke up all the members. It was just day-break. The commander of the squad, Comrade Samuel, taking shelter behind a boulder, kept up constant fire to see that the enemy did not encircle them, and also to provide cover for the rest to escape.

One squad commander was able to break through and reach a sheltered position behind a well. He kept up fire from there and warded off the military's advance. Meanwhile, cattle in the field, frightened by the sound of the firing, started running helter-skelter. Taking shelter behind these running cattle he escaped.

But Comrade Samuel could not escape, since he was busy providing protection for his escaping comrades. Both Comrade Samuel and Comrade Ailayya died on the spot. Two young boys who had tried to interpose themselves between the soldiers and the guerrillas, were also shot dead, despite their pleading for their lives to be spared.

Comrade Samuel who came from a working class family from Akkarajupalle village (Jangaon taluka), joined the guerrilla squads in the anti-Nizam struggle period in 1947. By his courage, determination and his service, he soon became the commander of a guerrilla squad, killing a number of *Razakars*, and later, the armed police after the 'police action'.

Comrade Ailayya had come to the Party in the early stages of the movement, and was one of those injured in the police shooting in Aleru in 1947, on the occasion of the flag-hoisting. He had lost his right arm in the firing. Disabled, he still did not want to go home, and continued in the service of the people. Going along with the squads, he taught politics to them and the people, made them literate and remained an ideal comrade for all his colleagues. Whenever there was criticism and self-criticism, both sides used to quote Comrade Ailayya as an example of a disciplined life. And he died in the struggle

Comrade Thanu: On March 20, 1950, in Mundrai village, Jangaon taluka, a lambadi youth, Thanu, died a hero's death in the Telangana people's struggle, with the slogan, 'Communist Party Zindabad', 'Death to the Enemy', on his lips.

A young man of great courage and iron will, he had a great love for his people, and anger in his heart for the injustice done to the backward Lambadi tribes. He soon won over the hearts of all Lambadis.

After the Indian army's entry, for a year and a half he evaded the police, who wanted to capture him alive. But in the end, a traitor betrayed him. He was caught and tortured, but refused to give out any Party secrets. His courage surprised the military officers, who refused to shoot him. But the Ramavaram *deshmukh*, Katari Narsing Rao, to whom Thanu was a terror, got him tied to a cart and dragged him behind it, till he died.

Thanu's parents belonged to Dharmapuram village in Jangaon taluka. They

had 6 sons; Thanu was the fourth. For years together, they had suffered badly under the contractor, Pusukuri Raghavarao. Fifteen years earlier, when there was no people's movement in those parts, these old people had led many a struggle against this contractor and the Visnur Deshmukh's *goondas*, who were trying to snatch away the lands cultivated by the Lambadis.

After its 11th Conference when the Andhra Mahasabha spread its influence in Jangaon taluka, this was the first family to join it, and under the leadership of the AMS, led many a struggle of the Lambadis. In spite of the efforts of the Visnur Deshmukh and Pusukuri Raghavarao to break the AMS, these people, without succumbing, stood fast their ground. When the military had attacked Kadavendi village and killed Comrade Komarayya, it was this family that first ran to defend the village, gave courage to and mobilised the people. When the *deshmukh's* armed *goondas* had attacked the village, it was with this family's encouragement and plan that saw the people surround the *goondas* and drive them away. The children in this family had a great share in this counter-attack. Since that time, the family, standing like an unbreakable rock in the people's struggles, had become a terror to the enemy, who tried their best to kill them. The family became a Party family and gave all its strength to the Party. In 1946, when the local leader, Mohan Reddy, was arrested, again it was this family that led the people in an attack on the police station and without caring for the pointed rifles, went ahead to question the police officers. When three hundred military men had surrounded the village, these people mobilised the villagers and fought the enemy with their catapults (slings) for three hours, trying the patience of the military. From then on this family became the target of the Government and the people's enemies. the police and *goondas* tried to hunt and capture the young ones working for the Party. At last, the third son of the family, Sanku, was arrested, tortured, and kept in jail, then later released. In 1947, the eldest son, Jodhya, was caught in Pallerla village (Bhuvanagiri taluka). He was in jail for a long time where he also was tortured.

The police and the *goondas* tried to attack the womenfolk of the family. But Jodhya'a wife, Pullamma, a brave woman, not only did not allow the police to touch her, but put up a fight against them. After that, she organised all the women.

During the *Razakar* days, their home was set on fire, looted, and cultivation of their lands prevented twice. The enemy then caught Somla, the second son. They made him prepare a pyre for himself, set fire to it and pushed him alive into the fire. Somla declaring his full faith in his ideals, became a martyr. With this blow, the enemy thought, the family would bend down. But in vain. The second time, the enemy attacked and pulled down the house, and shot dead the small children. Even this did not break the spirit of the family. Under every circumstance, they first protected the Party and the squads. This 80-year-old couple, in spite of all their grief and sorrow, had infinite faith and love for the Party. The old man's hand was broken by the enemy, but he would not submit or bend before the enemy.

After the 'police action', the raids on the family were intensified, and with that the family's hatred for the enemy also grew. Their fifth son, Dorsa, joined the guerrilla squad and soon became a favourite of the people for his work and courage. He was arrested on February 16, 1949, and tortured, but refused to give out any secret. Ultimately he was sentenced to death. While awaiting the sentence, he set an example to the other comrades in jail. Within 10 days of his arrest, the last son, Kishan (18 years old) was put in jail. Even with one son dead, and three in jail, the family did not swerve from their chosen path. Three days after Thanu's death, the squad members went to meet the family and express their grief, but they, putting aside their sorrow, guarded the squads as long as they were there. This family's thirst for revenge on the enemy and faith in the Party were unbreakable.

Gowrelli Mallayya: Comrade Gowrelli Mallayya (of Sirsilla taluka), who was working as an organiser in the plains area, fell ill, and it was in this situation that he fell into the hands of the military. After the usual beating, he was tied to a bullock cart and dragged along the road. The skin peeled off, blood flowed from his body, but not a secret from his mouth. Both his hands and legs were cut off, one by one, and in between, he was again tortured to tell secrets. Not a word did he reveal, but met his death as heroes do.

Coming from a very poor family in Sirsilla taluka, he joined the squads in the anti-Nizam struggle period. He was known among the squads as one of the best marksmen and used his skill in the interests of the people, by shooting down a number of soldiers and other enemies of the people. It was his squad that took part in the sniping at Bontakattunagaram village, where three soldiers were killed and three rifles seized.

Comrade Bhupati Reddy: After taking action against the betrayers of the people in Basireddipalle village, a guerrilla squad reached China Samudralo village (Karimnagar district), and was taking shelter in a field, where the crop had grown high. The military encircled them but due to the carelessness of the sentry, they did not know of the enemy's approach in advance.

The squad decided not to surrender, come what may. They opened fire on the military and kept them at a distance, but they had to breach the enemy's encirclement in order to escape. Because of the firing from the squad, the military did not dare enter the field, but fell on the ground around and started firing from there.

This situation prevailed for some time, the squad and the enemy sticking to their positions and firing continuing all the time. The guerrillas felt that it was not safe to continue in this position for a long time, since the enemy could get additional forces. The only way out was to take the risk and breach the enemy encirclement. All the nine squad members en masse rushed to the spot where they felt the enemy was weak.

The enemy, too, finding the squad almost on top of them, retreated further

back whilst keeping a few of its members to maintain the fire. The squad, while returning the fire in self-defence, managed to break through the circle and escape. But in the action, one member of the squad, Comrade Bhupati Reddy (of Siddipet taluka), died. Comrade Reddy's rifle fire wounded a militaryman.

Comrade Gajjala Ramanarsimha Reddy (Venkatarama-puram): Organiser of Mattampalli centre. He was the leader in the agricultural labour struggles and land struggles, and developed the movement in that centre. Though he came from a rich family, he developed proletarian virtues and outlook. He had to leave for Vijayawada during the massive raids of 1950, where he was caught by a police agent from Mellacheruvu, Rowdy Satyam. He was tortured but did not give up his resistance nor reveal any secrets. He was taken to Duppalagattu Lambadi *tanda* and shot dead before the eyes of all those people, in the last week of April, 1950.

Comrade Muttavarapu Venkayya: Organiser, Kapugallu centre. He was a leader of the agricultural labour strikes and land struggles from the *Nizam-Razakar* days. It was under his leadership that the property of the hated landlords of Kapugallu was destroyed. In January 1950, he was surrounded by the enemy. Though he fought valiantly and threw a crude hand grenade, he was overpowered and caught. Tortured for three days he did not utter a single word. Then he was shot dead. All the people of that centre wept as if their light had gone out, and remembered his determination and bravery even when in the hands of the enemy.

Comrade Nakrikanti Venkulu: Organiser of Betavolu centre. He came from an agricultural labour family from Keetavarigudem village and led many agricultural labour strikes and land distribution struggles. Loved immensely by the labouring people, he was in the forefront of many attacks on the enemies in the whole centre. In 1950, he was passing through Yatavakilla where the police caught him and shot him. He fell down shouting, 'Communist Party Zindabad, Long Live the Red Flag, Death to the Enemies'.

Comrades Balija Ramulu and Chakali Somulu: Both hailed from Chintagunta. Comrade Ramulu was the organiser of the Penchikaladinne centre. He took a leading part in actions to liquidate the hated landlords and police agents, apart from leading agricultural labour and land struggles. In March 1950, he was decoyed by the landlords of Chintagunta, led by Vangala Narsi Reddi, to settle the land problems, promising to abide by his decision. He was caught there and handed over to the police at the Subbareddygudem camp. Both these comrades were tortured. They refused to give away any secrets and treated the enemy with contempt. Somulu was very young, only 15 years old. After Ramulu was shot dead in his presence, Somulu was threatened with a similar fate if he did not give the information. He shouted back 'The *Sangham* is mine. We in thousands will lay down our lives for our *Sangham*'. He died boldly with utter contempt and hatred for the enemy. They were shot on March 21, 1950, in the Subbareddygudem camp in Miryalagudem taluka.

Comrade Bareddi Saidulu (Reddy): Squad leader from the Razakar days. Coming from Mellacheruvu he became a centre organiser and fought against Kandibandla Janaki Rama Rao, the notorious landlord. He led many an agricultural labour strike, confiscated enemy property and his cotton carts. Once, after accompanying the zonal organiser to his village, he was waiting in a field when he was spotted by enemy agents. The police surrounded him. He shouted at them, 'Even if I die, my *Sangaham* will not die. It will avenge our deaths'. The police shot him dead, along with Basetti Ramulu in July 1949.

Comrade Pentayya (Koppulu Penta Reddy): Coming from Amaravaram village, Lingagiri enclave, he was active in agricultural labour strikes. He was very badly beaten in the police camp at the instance of the village *munsiff* (*patel*). After his release, he joined the Party in 1950. Immediately afterwards, he liquidated the hated village *munsiff*. He became an active squad member, and participated in many actions. Later, he became the squad leader. In the raid on the Ellampeta police station, he was creeping up to throw a hand-grenade through the window, when the police *jamedar* who was guarding the station shot him. The bullet pierced his skull and he died instantly. He was a very brave and determined comrade, with plenty of initiative and enthusiasm.

Comrade Nasarayya: Belonging to Mellacheruvu, he was a guerrilla squad member, illiterate but determined and brave. He participated in many raids on the police camps and on enemy agents, from the *Razakar* days. He participated in the raid on the police station in Penuganachiprolu, playing a prominent part. The raiding party, after capturing nearly 20 weapons, retreated and was taking shelter in the fields around Malkapuram village, during daylight. Betrayed by a watchman of the field, the squad was surrounded. While trying to escape he fell down, his leg caught in the red gram (*arhar dal*) bushes. He was bayoneted and caught. The police brought him to his village, after knocking him about, without removing the bayonet, to try to get the secrets of the squad. He did not reveal any and was shot dead. The other members of the squad escaped with great difficulty, but the weapons were lost to the police.

Comrade Vakkantu Suryanarayana: Comrade Suryanarayana and four other comrades were shot dead at Keetavarigudem. Suryanarayana belonged to Velidanda village; Harijan Chandrayya to Gondrela, Mera Janayya and Harijan Somayya to Sandrupatla and Chelasani Velama Somayya to Malkapuram. Four of them had joined the squad only in 1950. Comrade Suryanarayana had given up his studies and joined the movement in Nalgonda, in its early days. He was only 18. He was arrested while seeking shelter in different places, immediately after the 'police action', during the massive raids. Spending two years in jail he took an active part in many jail struggles and was beaten by the authorities.

When he was released, he straightaway searched for contact with the underground party centres and joined the squads. He did not even go to his village. He took the responsibility of the centre organiser. When he was surrounded in Keetavarigudem he threw his empty revolver into the tank, which later the people

recovered and handed over to the Party. His parents had tried to wean him away from these activities, but even though he was young, he spurned all their efforts and pursued the glorious path of people's struggle and laid down his life in the great cause.

Comrade "Russia" Lingulu: Born in Chintakallu, of Huzurnagar taluka, Comrade Lingulu joined the guerrilla squads against the *Razakars* and the Nizam. He was an expert, rapid shooter, even with his muzzle-loader. After the 'police action', when the Party organisation was disrupted due to incessant raids, and the leaders were forced to leave the area, he lived among the people, gave them courage and confidence that the Party would come back and lead them to victory. He re-established contact with the Party centre. But when he was caught and subjected to horrible torture he did not reveal anything, not even his or his parents' names. He was known only as Russia Lingulu because he used to always propagate the successes of Socialist Russia and the achievements of the Russian Revolution.

After a few weeks, he was, by chance, released, along with some other detenus. People gave him shelter and sent him to the Party centre. He now, by Party decision, retreated to the new area of Kolhapur in Mehbubnagar district. He became a good rifle shooter, and was very good in extending the movement. One day, while he and his squad were sleeping, they were surrounded by the Sikh armed police and he was wounded and captured. In spite of torture, he refused to reveal any secrets and was shot dead. People say that his last words were: 'I will die but my Party, the Communist Party, is there. It is invincible. It will avenge my death. It will lead the revolution successfully and establish a toiling people's raj as in Russia'.

Comrade Ravipati Lingayya: A 60-year-old courier, and an expert swimmer, he was in charge of ferrying comrades across the River Krishna, all through the period beginning from the *Nizam-Razakar* days. He used to gather information from people all around. The police did not get hold of him in spite of their repeated efforts. He trained and recruited his two sons also, for membership into the Party, and he, too, applied for member ship and was admitted into the Party. When the squads and organisers retreated to the Amarabad forest region, after repeated massive raids, he went to his relatives in a village for shelter. There he was caught and horribly tortured. Pieces of his flesh were cut from all over his body; he did not reveal any secret and he was shot dead.

Comrade Ramu (Gangireddy Koti Reddy): An important cadre in Huzurnagar area, belonging to Timmalagiri-Miryalagudem. He knew the dens of the leading cadre where Rs. 50,000 and four candies (about a ton) of gunpowder and 15 firearms were being kept. He was tortured for 15 days but he did not reveal any information. He died a great martyr's death.

Comrades Akkala Saidayya and Ginjaluri Pitchayya: Comrade Saidayya came from Bottalapalem village and was working in the Huzurnagar area committee technical apparatus, from the *Nizam-Razakar* days. He knew the ins and outs of the whole forest. He was a great prop to the poor against the forest

contractors and guards. Ginjaluri Pitchayya hailed from Jagannathapuram village of Munagala pargana. He led many agricultural labour struggles against the landlords and was forced to leave the village. He came and joined the Party and was admitted into the guerrilla squad.

Both these comrades went into Bottalapalem to get food, where the rowdy gang headed by the village patel Veeramallayya pounced upon them and handed them over to the police. The police tortured them horribly, cutting pieces of flesh from various parts of the body, from morning till the evening. These two heroes of Telangana, too, refused to utter a word of information. From Pitchayya they could not get even the name of his village. The police shot both of them at Kaluvepalli hillocks, on August 8, 1950.

Comrade Gunda Venkanna: A merchant and well-to-do peasant belonging to Tadakamallu. He joined the Party during the Nalgonda people's movement, during the Nizam days itself. Ha developed into a centre organiser after conducting many struggles against the landlord and organised the distribution of thousands of acres of land in the Topucherla centre. He took shelter in the Union territory after the 'police action'. Whilst trying to get into contact with the Party he was arrested at Masulipatnam in 1950. Tortured to join the Home Guards, when he refused he was shot dead.

Comrade Ranga Reddy: Coming from a rich peasant family of Komareddigudem, he joined the Party during the Nizam days. Active in the land distribution movement especially the lands of the Babasahebpet Deshmukhs, he conducted agricultural labour struggles during 1949, after the 'police action', in this centre. Caught by the enemy in January 1950, he was shot dead.

Comrade Appi Reddy: Of Ramadugu centre. A middle peasant, he joined the squad during the *Nizam-Razakar* days. He was arrested after the 'police action' and participated in many struggles in jails. After release in 1950, he rejoined the squads and participated effectively in the raids on buses. His squad was surrounded once and he was arrested. Tortured in Borrayapalem camp, he did not reveal any secrets. He was shot dead.

Comrade Akarapu Saidulu: Of Bottalapalem. A farm servant himself, he was a militant leader of agricultural labour strikes. He was many a time caught and tortured by the police and landlords, and was caught and shot dead in 1950.

Comrade Sunkara Venkatappayya: Of Ramasamudram village. Squad commander of Munagala, he led many actions and liquidated a number of enemies. One day he was sleeping in a field when the informers brought the police and surrounded him. He fought with his 'guider' till the end and after his bullets were exhausted, he and his two companions were overpowered and shot dead.

Comrades Golla Muthayya, Nandayya, Gurram Narsi Reddy: Hailing from the village of Jagannathpuram, Comrade Muthayya was the organiser of the Munagala pargana centre, and from the time he gave up studies, had been in the forefront of the struggle against the Munagala zamindar. He, along with

Comrade Nandayya, also from the same village, and with zonal organiser, Comrade Gurram Narsi Reddy, was caught in a secret shelter in Munagala enclave in 1950. They were tortured and shot dead in the Valyapuram hillocks. Comrade Gurram Narsi Reddy came from Timmapuram. He had led many struggles for land distribution and for fair wages for agricultural labourers in the hill, area bordering Munagala and Suryapet. He had become the beloved leader of the people and a terror to the landlord, Anireddy Ranga Reddy.

Comrade S. Punnayya: Comrade Punnayya was an agricultural labourer from Anjalipuram village, Munagala pargana, and much respected by the Lambadi tanda people. A member of Ramanarsa Reddy's squad he was caught in Anjalipuram, whilst trying to make Party contacts after the massive raids of 1949-1950. He was tortured and shot dead.

Comrades Gundu Ramulu and Balayya: Comrade Ramulu had participated in many peasant struggles of Munagala and later joined the Telangana people's struggle. He constantly strove to improve his political and organisational capacities and overcame some of his bad habits. Later, he developed the people's movement in the Lingala area, in Mehboobnagar district, adjoining the Krishna River valley and in the forests.

Comrade Balayya, a youth coming from a rich family from the village of Kothapalli of the Kolhapur district, joined the Party and worked along with Comrade Ramulu. It was he who obtained all the information necessary for the raid on the police camp at Kothapalli.

Both Comrades Ramulu and Balayya were betrayed by the landlords and their agents In Balmar village. Both were tortured but the enemy could not extract any information from them, and they were shot dead.

(In the Telangana struggle, 43 party members and active workers from Munagala enclave were killed. After the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956, Munagala was made part of Huzurnagar taluka).

Comrade Uttarayya (Narasimhalu): Coming from Bollepalli village, Comrade Narasimhalu was working as a clerk under the village landlords. Later, he joined the Party and worked in the guerrilla squads. He was caught with the help of one Sale Ramaswami, a relative of Uttarayya, in Surepalli village and shot dead in the Nandanam military camp.

Guerrilla squads later attacked Sale Ramulu and killed him, also confiscating three 12-bore shotguns.

Comrade Narasimnalu's aunt was also betrayed as she was helping the guerrillas. She was caught, raped and shot dead after three days.

Comrade Chada Komarayya: Also a clerk, his brother sided with the enemy in the Puligilla struggle and was killed by the guerrillas. At first, he and his second elder brother, Aillayya, were against the Party. But gradually, they understood its ideals and activities, and joined the Party.

Aillayya was arrested along with Comrade K. Ramachandra Reddy, a Party

leader of Ramannapeta. After the 'police action', he retreated to Bagatu, but was later arrested in West Bhuvanagiri area in Kunur village. After his release, he started functioning again as centre organiser, but was again arrested in Kunur and shot dead in the Motakodur military camp.

Comrade Baddam Narayana: An agricultural labourer, Comrade Narayana led many strikes and won monthly wages of 80 seers of paddy for the labourers. Later he became a wholetime functionary of the Party. When he was forced to go away from West Bhuvanagiri, he joined the railways as a worker. There he was betrayed and shot dead.

Comrade Gokula Mattayya (Reddy): Comrade Mattayya was arrested during the Nizam period, kept in jail and later let off. Immediately, he, along with his wife, joined the Party, and resumed his activities. Again he was arrested and shot dead, and his wife raped to death.

Comrade Appajipeta Lingayya: Appajipeta Lingayya of Koppolu village, Nalgonda taluka, and Comrade Venkatanaraayya, handloom weaver of Peda village, Ramannapeta taluka, were betrayed in Rapolu village by home guards. They were shot dead. Later the home guards were severely beaten up by the squads and the main culprits were killed.

Comrades Gutta Seeta Rami Reddy and Paila Ramachandra Reddy: The Party had conducted a one-week school in the Rachakonda hillocks. The fifty organisers and squad members were to leave for their respective areas the following morning. One among those who supplied their food that day, betrayed the comrades, and by early morning, a large contingent of the army surrounded the hillock and scoured the area till evening. Normally these hillocks are impregnable, and but for the betrayal, they would never have been found. Those of the squad members who were sleeping at a little distance from the hillocks realised the danger, but continued to stick to their positions, without betraying their presence to the military. But those who had not noticed the encirclement, were caught.

Comrade P. Ramachandra Reddy (area committee member), came out from his hiding-place to go to the tank, which was the pre-arranged meeting place. Signals were given as had been originally decided. But, meanwhile, the military came out and opened fire from all sides. Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour was caught.

When the military started firing, Comrade Ramachandra Reddy was drinking water from the tank. With bullets flying on both sides, he thought the only escape was to jump into the tank and take shelter there. But the military caught hold of him. A number of others somehow managed to escape. One squad member, donning shepherd's clothes, took the risk of rushing to another spot, where another squad was taking shelter and alerted them. It was because of this forewarning that this squad was saved.

Of the three arrested, the armymen took Comrade Seeta Rami Reddy and Ramachandra Reddy to the Pochampalli military camp and tortured them. Then they took them round to Bhongir, Nalgonda and Shirky talukas, to seek

information. For a whole month the torture went on, but they failed to extract one word of information from them. 'You are exploiters and you will meet your death one day at the hands of our squads. We are not here to betray our people'. They were subjected to further continuous tortures.

When the Party outside got news of this, it immediately filed a writ petition in the court. The High Court ordered both these comrades to be produced before it. Immediately on receipt of this order, the military authorities and the Government hatched a conspiracy. If the comrades in their then position were produced in the court, the army authorities would get a stricture from the court and their atrocities would be exposed. So they took their prisoners to a nearby hillock and shot them.

Comrade Seeta Rami Reddy hailed from Korumalla village (Nalgonda taluka and was born into an ordinary peasant family); as a zonal commander he organised a mass movement against the Nizam, in a very wide area. He organised the distribution of thousands of acres of land and cattle, to hundreds of people, and suppressed the enemies. After the Union army intervention, he retreated to the Rachakonda hillocks, but continued to keep in touch with the plains areas. Even after he was caught and tortured, his unflinching faith and loyalty to the cause of the people gave him the strength to withstand torture and reveal not a single secret.

Comrade Paila Ramachandra Reddy, who hailed from a rich peasant family in Sunshala village (Ramannapet taluka), was one of the builders of the mass movement in Ramannapet taluka. He also strove to build up similar movements in Jangaon and Nalgonda talukas and thus became one of those who fought against the Nizam, organised distribution of thousands of acres of land and cattle to the people, put down the *Razakar* and *deshmukh* menace and later retreated to the Rachakonda hillocks. After being caught, he put into practice the precepts he had taught to the people, that they should never reveal a secret, that they should never surrender and that they should not betray the Party.

Comrade Mukundam: Squad commander Comrade Mukundam went to Hyderabad for some Party work. This news somehow reached the army and they arrested him. After torturing him, he was taken round various military camps in Ramannapet taluka. Having failed in their mission to extract secrets from him, they took him to Veldevi village (Ramannapet taluka) where they mobilised the people in the village and right before their eyes, shot him dead. He died shouting, 'Communist Party Zindabad'.

Chowlla Ramavaram village was the birthplace of Comrade Mukundam. Coming from an agricultural labour family, he was a discharged soldier from the Second World War. He came forward actively and joined the guerrilla squads and was given a commander's post.

Comrade Erra Narsi Reddy: Seven members, of whom one was an organiser and another a courier, gathered at Patelgudem well (Bhongir taluka). Some people

also came there to get some of their problems settled. It was about 5 in the morning. This news reached the military and they came with a big force from the Aler and Jangaon camps and encircled the area. The sentry found this out and alerted the members. There were only two weapons with them, but they decided to break through the cordon, knowing well that it was a very risky adventure. But, the alternative, too, was suicidal for all of them. Despite bren gun and rifle fire from the enemy, the squad tried to make their way through by counterfire. In the process, Comrade Erra Narsi Reddy, centre organiser from Kolanupaka, fell down hit by a bren gun bullet. Courier Pembarti Mallayya, the owner of the well, a member of the local squad, Ramulu, and four other peasants who had come with their problems, died on the spot. The rest were able to escape. Comrade Narsi Reddy, who had fallen down with a bullet in his leg, was surrounded by the military. They aimed the rifle at his heart and demanded information. They only got the reply: 'Shoot if you want, but you will get nothing from me'. Where upon they shot him dead.

Coming into the anti-Nizam struggle in 1947, Comrade Narsi Reddy of Siddenki village (Jangaon taluka) worked as the centre organiser in Kolanupaka area and died rendering yeoman service to the people of Jangaon and Bhongir talukas.

Comrade Vediri Raji Reddy was born into a rich family in Huzurnagar taluka. He was a prominent leader of the Andhra Mahasabha of that area, becoming an active Communist as soon as the movement developed in that area. He was arrested immediately after the Indian army intervention and kept in jail (Warangal).

Comrade Rangachari hailed from Kamareddigudem of Nizamabad district. He was a young artist, earning his livelihood in Hyderabad city. He was also active in the trade unions and in the Andhra Mahasabha and people's activity in the city. He was a very resourceful person and able to help the Party with many technical preparations. He was also arrested in the early part of 1949.

Both these comrades were taken from jail by the police and military and were shot dead, after failing to get any secret from them.

Similarly, Comrade Jagannathachari, an active Andhra Mahasabha worker of Munagala, was arrested and kept in different police camps, and in the Union territory of Andhra. Later he was taken to the Khammam area and on the way, was shot dead.

These cases were taken to the Supreme Court in Habeas Corpus petitions but nothing came out of it, as the Government pleaded that they had escaped from police custody and their whereabouts were not known.

In the Andhra area, during 1950, quite a few comrades were taken from jails and the courts, and were shot dead.

Homes of some Comrades killed by Indian Forces After Withdrawal of Armed Struggle

- Comrade Muthireddy Venkatachalam—Already mentioned

- Comrade Nalla Narasimhulu (Junior)—Already mentioned
- Comrades Ramu and Bhallu—Already mentioned
- Comrade Harischandra Rao—Mallaram village, Manthena taluka
- Comrade Nanu—Mahadevapuram village (Already mentioned)
- Pedatandla village leaders
- Comrade Yellaboyina Ramulu—K. Samudram was shot dead
- Comrade Seetaramulu—Inugurti of Manukota

Comrade Bheemireddy Kondal Reddy (Suryapet) and **Comrade Pusuluri Satyam (Khammam):** Comrade Bheemireddy Kondal Reddy, coming from a rich peasant family, actively joined the movement along with his cousins. Soon he became a good military commander, modest and humble. By his simplicity and hard work, he became an example to other squad members, and commanded their discipline and implicit obedience.

When the enemy offensive intensified, he and his squad also retreated to Manukota forest area. In the area, at that time, unfortunately, in the absence of Comrade B. Narasimha Reddy, who was at the State centre, Ch. Thirumalrao was functioning as the area secretary. He did not have the patience and maturity to unify and lead these squads and commanders in that difficult situation.

Under extremely trying circumstances, with the situation further worsening, differences arose on how to conduct guerrilla actions, deployment of cadres, etc. Thirumalrao panicked and talked individually to some of the military squad leaders and got executed these two brave squad leaders, Kondal Reddy and Pusuluri Satyam, and courier Lingayya accusing them of planning to murder him and the leadership. The Party later decided that these comrades were not guilty and should be considered loyal comrades who lost their lives for the cause of the people during the Telangana armed struggle.

Later on, after the struggle was withdrawn, this Thirumalrao when arrested, obtained his release through the intervention of his relatives in the State Congress. Afterwards, he actively opposed our Party and the people's movement and became a Congress agent.

11

Withdrawal of Telangana Armed Partisan Resistance

The peasantry and the people of Telangana, since long, had been struggling against the forced labour, illegal exactions, evictions by the feudal landlords, *deshmukhs* and *jagirdars*. The struggle was directed against the autocratic regime of the Nizam Nawab of Hyderabad, against the oppression of his bureaucratic officials such as the village *patels*, *patwaris* and the other revenue and police officers, and against the suppression of the mother-tongue of the Telugu-Marathi and Kannada-speaking people in the State. There were demands for elementary democratic rights and civil liberties such as the right of freedom of speech, assembly and press, and also for setting up a responsible government in the State, in the place of the dictatorial personal rule of the Nizam Nawab.

But this struggle of the Telangana people assumed a different, radical and militant character, when the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha passed into the hands of the Communist Party and its cadres, during the year 1943. The peasant struggle in Telangana, thereafter, had steadily acquired the character of an agrarian revolt, finally raising the slogans for the abolition of landlordism, for the overthrow of the Nizam's autocratic rule, for the liquidation of the princely State of Hyderabad and for the merger of the different language-speaking peoples into the new States of Visalandhra, Samyukta-Karnataka and Maharashtra. The Telangana peasant struggle which initially began as self-defence with lathis and slings against the *goonda* attacks of the *deshmukhs* and *Razakars* and the atrocities of the police forces of the Nizam Nawab, had culminated in an armed liberation struggle against the princely state of Hyderabad.

The Congress Government which had ordered the entry of the Indian armies into Hyderabad, no doubt, ended the *Razakar* menace and also the dynastic rule of the Nizam. But the Union Government not only permitted the hated Nizam Nawab to continue as *Rajpramukh*, keeping intact the feudal state boundaries of the Hyderabad State, but also directed its main attack against the hard-won gains of the Telangana peasantry and the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha which were leading the heroic Telangana struggle. The destruction of the popular democratic peasant movement and the Communist Party became the principal aim and the immediate task of the Indian Government and its armed forces.

The crucial question that was posed before the fighting Telangana people

and the Communist Party that had the privilege of leading the struggle, was whether to continue the armed guerrilla resistance against the attacks of the Indian Union's armed forces, in defence of the peasant's land and other democratic gains, or to surrender arms to the Congress Government's armies and betray the trust placed in our Party by the fighting people of Telangana. Were we to abandon the partisan armed resistance and adopt the legal forms of struggle and agitation, permitted by the military rule of the Congress Government in the Hyderabad State?

Over this life and death question, two sharply opposed views amongst the leaders of the Communist Party had emerged.

One section of comrades, whose views were systematically put forth by Ravi Narayana Reddy in his notorious document, *Naked Truth of Telangana,* began advocating the abandonment of partisan armed resistance against the armed attacks of the Indian Union armies, and for the adoption of the open and legal forms of struggle and agitation.

The main arguments of those who advocated the slogan of abandoning the partisan resistance, were the following: (a) a large section of the people, including the rich peasantry and the liberal landlords who were supporting the Telangana armed struggle till the entry of the Indian armies, would turn hostile to the partisan struggle; (b) the people would be looking upon the armies of the Congress Government as liberators, not as oppressors; (c) the armed struggle in a small area like Telangana cannot defend and sustain itself, until all-India-wide armed struggles break out, and there were no such possibilities; (d) our armed squads were either poorly armed or virtually unarmed, and hence could not resist the well-equipped Indian armies and their superior numbers.

The Visalandhra Communist Committee was opposed to this view-point. It advocated the slogan of armed partisan resistance against the attacks of the Union armies on the gains of the Telangana peasantry. Its arguments were broadly the following:

i. The big gains of the Telangana peasantry, and in particular the 10 lakhs acres of land that was distributed among the peasantry, had to be defended, and those gains should not be allowed to be snatched away by the class enemies, without bitter resistance and fight.

ii. The national and international situation was favourable for the armed partisan struggle, and the Telangana struggle was the beginning of the armed liberation struggle against the bourgeois-landlord Government of the Congress party; the Telangana armed struggle was demonstrating that the Indian revolution was more akin to the Chinese Revolution than to the classical Russian Revolution. To quote as to how exactly this was formulated by the then Andhra Secretariat, in its May 1948 document:

'Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian Revolution, but to a great extent is similar to that of the Chinese Revolution. The perspective likely is not that of a general strike and armed uprising, leading to the liberation

of the rural side, but of dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of agrarian revolution, culminating in the capture of political power by the Democratic Front'.

The theses of the Andhra Secretariat stated further:

'Keeping all this in view, in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses, as in certain parts of Andhra, Kerala and Bengal, the time has come to think in terms of guerrilla warfare (Chinese way) against the military onslaughts of the Nehru Government which is bent upon mercilessly liquidating us'.

iii. The Andhra theses also advocated a united front, which included the rich peasantry and the middle bourgeoisie as the allies of the proletariat in the People's Democratic Revolution, and asserted that such a wide front of armed struggle could take shape under the leadership of the Communist Party, and the objective conditions for the materialisation of these aims were rapidly maturing. But a prolonged armed resistance like that of Telangana alone would bring about such favourable conditions.

The Polit Bureau that was elected at the Second Party Congress had rejected the entire theses of the Andhra Secretariat as gross reformism, and launched an attack on the concept of the Chinese path, characterising it as a deviation from Marxism-Leninism. The Polit Bureau maintained that there was only one path, and that was the path of the Russian revolution, namely, the political general strike and armed workers' uprising in the cities to capture power.

But the Polit Bureau strongly advocated the slogan of armed resistance in Telangana, as it might hasten the working class general strike and armed uprising, in the anticipated post-war revolutionary crisis.

The Communist Party of India, at its Second Party Congress in February-March, 1948, had raised the slogan, 'The Telangana way is our way'. It had declared all-out support to the armed struggle of Telangana; it had called for developing similar struggles in several other parts of the country; and it had given a call to develop working class movements in support of the Telangana struggle—all ultimately leading to armed insurrection.

There had been glorious struggles such as the Vayalar-Punnapra struggle in Kerala there were the armed peasant actions in certain areas of West Bengal and Tripura, and the Warli peasant revolt in Bombay. Similarly, there had taken place a number of militant peasant struggles in different parts of the country—struggles where some sort of armed clashes had taken place between the peasantry and the police—though none of these struggles had either been sustained or developed into partisan armed struggles.

The working class which had come out in support of the revolt in the Royal Indian Navy, and for the release of the Indian National Army prisoners during the 1945–1947 period, could not be brought into effective action in support of the Telangana peasant armed struggle. There were no solidarity strikes in support of the Telangana struggle, either before the intervention of the Indian Union armies

in September 1943 or during the three long years of the Telangana armed resistance till October 1951. The call for general strike of the railway workers on their own specific demands, also had not materialised except in some centres. The Telangana armed struggle alone had to carry the entire brunt of the offensive let loose by the armed forces of the Indian Government—and that too with the subjectively conceived aim of overthrowing the Nehru Government.

In the international arena, the People's Republic of China had been established, following the final victory of the revolution in October 1949. The people of Vietnam, led by its Communist Party and its beloved leader HO CHI MINH, were putting up fierce armed resistance against the attacks of the French imperialists who were attempting to reimpose their colonial rule; and they were inflicting powerful blows against the imperialists, though this struggle was exacting tremendous sacrifices from the people of Vietnam. The People's Democratic Republic of Korea, assisted by the huge volunteer army of the Chinese Republic, had rolled back the U.S. and allied armies of aggression to the 37th parallel. The U.S. armies had landed in Taiwan to defend the puppet regime of Chiang Kai-shek. These and similar other revolutionary struggles such as in Burma, Malaya, the Phillipines, et cetera, seemed to be of a very protracted nature.

The U.S. imperialists, after succeeding in eliminating the Communists from the newly-established post-war Governments of France and Italy, had set to work to consolidate the monopolist-led regimes, through the launching of plans such as Marshall Aid and drawing these countries into military pacts like NATO.

The Nehru Government had finalised its new Constitution and declared India as the Republic of India, even though the new Indian Republic was made a member of the British Commonwealth. It was able to politically consolidate its newly-gained power: it had succeeded in merging all the princely states into the Indian Union, though enormous concessions were given to the former princes and nawabs. A cease-fire agreement had been concluded in the Kashmir, thus easing the Indo-Pakistan relations, which had been strained in the communal massacres and Kashmir war. The tide of the post-war revolutionary wave had definitely receded and the new Congress Government had been successful in tiding over the postwar crisis and the consequent mass upheavals.

We have already shown how a good number of cadres and area committees in the Telangana region were raising their voice of opposition to the continuation of armed partisan resistance against the armies of the Indian Union after the 'police action'. We have also stated as to how, due to the newly-bred illusions about the Nehru Government and its promise of a democratic set-up in the Hyderabad State, vigilance was slackened, squads were disbanded and arms dumped, all this leading to the large-scale arrests of our Party workers and fighting militants.

But because of Party loyalty and the sense of discipline to abide by the Party line, the line of continuation of the armed guerrilla resistance, finally prevailed. Besides this sense of discipline, the return of the hated *deshmukhs*, landlords, village *patels* and *patwaris*, and their frenzied attempts to seize back

the peasants' lands, and the terror that was unleashed by them, had roused the indignation of the workers of the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha. These cadres of Telangana began re-organising themselves into squads to resist the armed attacks of the Union military and police.

We have also described, earlier, as to how a number of Andhra Mahasabha cadres of taluk, zonal, area and district level were driven out by the military raids, from the plains areas and thickly populated bases, into the forest belts, for shelter and self-preservation. These comrades, by their dogged and death-defying resistance, were able to strike terror among the landlords, thus preventing these hated exploiters from returning to the villages, and from stabilising their hold on their landed estates and farms. This armed partisan resistance could not be wiped out, even though the Union Congress Government had deployed 50 thousand armed personnel, spending on an average, ten to fifteen crores of rupees per year. The armed partisans belonging to the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha were shedding their blood in this unequal struggle against the far superior armed forces of the Congress Government.

It was quite natural, under these most trying and desperate conditions, that questions were raised as to how long this could continue. Why was it that no other area and in no other state in the Indian Union, similar armed struggle could be organised to lend support to the Telangana struggle? The leadership of the Telangana armed struggle, under the pressure of the fighting ranks of Telangana on the one hand, and provoked by the brutal repression let loose on the adjoining Andhra districts on the other, had attempted to extend the area of armed guerrilla resistance. But it did not succeed, and the armed police and landlord *goondas* had resorted to brutal murders of the Communist cadres.

Three hundred comrades were killed. The rest of the militant workers of the Party had to be shifted away from these districts either to the forest areas or to some distant places in other states. Thus, a tremendous dislocation of the Party organisation took place, and the problem of what next, faced the leadership of the Visalandhra Committee.

The situation in the rest of the country was no better. The Party and the revolutionary movement, faced with the cruel police attacks of the Congress Government on the one hand, and the wrong and sectarian policies pursued by the then all India leadership on the other, had been extremely weakened and disunited, besides a large number of cadres and leaders being arrested and detained in jails.

It was in such a background, that an editorial appeared in *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, sharply critical of the political line that was being pursued by the top leadership of the Indian Communist Party. Following the said editorial and the consequent inner-Party discussions and struggle, there took place a drastic reshuffle of the Central Committee and the Polit Bureau. A new Polit Bureau, with C. Rajeswar Rao as the General Secretary, was elected by the reconstituted Central Committee.

The new political line that was worked out by the newly constituted Central Committee and Polit Bureau was briefly the following:

- Rejection of the programmatic understanding given in the Second Party Congress and subsequently elaborated in what was called the 'Tactical Line'.
- Rejection of the thesis of single-stage revolution i.e., the theory of the intertwining of the democratic and socialist stages of the Indian revolution.
- Rejection of the idea that the entire bourgeoisie, including the rich peasantry, had been transformed into the enemies of the people's democratic revolution.
- Upholding of the concept of the Chinese path for the Indian revolution and advocating the developing of extensive agrarian revolutionary struggles on the pattern of Telangana, wherever conditions permitted.

Let it be mentioned here that there was stiff opposition to this new political line, of course, from an extreme right opportunist angle. The party headquarters in Bombay was made the centre of this new opposition. S. A. Dange, Ajay Kumar Ghosh and S. V. Ghate had assumed the leadership of this inner-party opposition. While this new opposition was allowed to function legally, the central leadership, as well as the leaders of the Telangana armed resistance had to function underground. In short, the inner-party situation had very much deteriorated, and the Party was virtually split into different trends and factions.

The new Polit Bureau, soon after it was elected, took stock of the grave political-ideological situation of the Party, and came to the conclusion that the restoration of the political-ideological and organisational unity inside the Communist Party of India was possible only if it could secure the guidance and assistance of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the leadership that commanded the highest authority in the world communist movement. The new Polit Bureau at once approached the leadership of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, who readily agreed to render all fraternal assistance in resolving the difficult political-organisational and ideological problems that the Communist Party of India was confronted with.

But the 'legal opposition', led by the Party headquarters in Bombay continued its disruptive activities, even after knowing that the Polit Bureau was seeking the help of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, to resolve the inner-party controversies. This disruption had harmed the partisan armed struggle of Telangana the most, though its immense damage to the Party and the mass movement in general cannot be minimised.

A delegation of our Party, comprising C. Rajeswar Rao, M. Basavapunniah, Ajay Kumar Ghosh and S. A. Dange, was deputed to discuss with the leaders of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, and seek clarification on all the issues that were under controversy inside the CPI. The Central Committee of the CPSU had set up a Commission, comprising Comrades Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov and Suslov, headed by Comrade Stalin, to assist our Party's delegation in this regard.

In this connection, I will have to digress and say a few words regarding

the fraternal assistance of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin. So far, we have scrupulously avoided any public mention of these discussions with the leaders of the CPSU and the fraternal criticism and advice given by them, as it might have been utilised by our class enemies to unleash a smear campaign against the CPSU, as well as our Party. Since the present leaders of the Right Communist Party such as S. A. Dange and C. Rajeswar Rao, have already been referring to these fraternal discussions and decisions in the open press, and since the name of Stalin is being drawn in by Rajeswar Rao in connection with the Telangana struggle and its lessons, we are left with no option but to truthfully state the nature of the discussions and the decisions that our Party arrived at, following those discussions.

The issues of controversy related to two separate topics, namely, the first, regarding the class assessment of the transfer of political power to the leaders of the Indian National Congress, the exact stage of the Indian Revolution, and the class strategy or alliance for the revolution; and the second, about the possible path of the Indian Revolution, i.e., whether it was the Russian or the Chinese path; what was the nature of the Telangana armed struggle, what were the different phases of partisan peasant armed struggle and how these peasant partisan struggles were not to be equated with the armed struggle for political power, etc. In short, the first concerned the Programme of the Party and the second dealt with the tactical questions of principle, theory and their concrete application to a concrete situation, and the like.

The main conclusions on the first topic were incorporated in the Draft Programme of the Communist Party of India, first printed and published in April 1951, which was amended and adopted by the All-India Party Conference, held in October 1951, and later by the Madurai Party Congress in 1953. But it was put in abeyance by the Palghat Party Congress in 1956, on the ground that it required some important changes.

The Draft published in April 1951 stated: (a) that the new state that came into existence was essentially the same old imperialist state, and the Congress Government was installed in power by the consent of the British imperialists, as it was a Government pledged to the protection and preservation of foreign British capital in India; (b) it rejected the understanding given by the theses of our Second Party Congress which placed the entire bourgeoisie including the rich peasantry, outside the pale of the People's Democratic Front, and visualised the possibility of winning all the Indian bourgeoisie, except some individuals and groups among the big bourgeoisie, who might betray; and (c) it corrected the erroneous theory of the intertwining of two stages of the revolution, though the class alliance it advocated was tantamount to that of the stage of the all-in general united front against imperialism and its feudal allies. This Programme of the year 1951 and some of its major propositions were subsequently given up, and a new Party Programme was adopted by our Party in 1964, at our Seventh Party Congress. Hence I do not propose to go into a detailed discussion of the merits and demerits of the 1951 Programme.

The present Programme of our Party definitely lays down that the new state that came into existence after the transfer of power in 1947 is a bourgeois-landlord state led by the big bourgeoisie which is allying with feudal and semi-feudal landlordism and collaborating with foreign finance capital, in pursuit of the capitalist path of development.

The class alliance that our Party Programme advocates for achieving the revolution, comprises of workers, peasants, middle classes and the non-big bourgeoisie, directed against the big bourgeois-led state and Government. The core of this People's Democratic Front, of course, is the worker-peasant alliance, and its destined leadership rests with the working class and its party. Our revolution at this stage is directed against landlordism, the big bourgeoisie and foreign finance capital.

The stage of the Indian revolution is not socialist, but only People's Democratic which does not aim at liquidation of capitalism as such, but is directed only against the monopoly capitalists and foreign imperialists, besides the liquidation of feudal and semi-feudal landlordism.

The second topic of the discussions concerned the possible path of the Indian Revolution and the theory and principles of tactics. This, too, was adopted at the All-India Conference in 1951 and was published under the title 'Statement of Policy'. The salient extracts from this document are given below. I have also added certain paragraphs (those not within quotes) to clarify the understanding given in these extracts, as arrived at, at that time.

India's Path to Revolution

The replacement of the present bourgeois-landlord State by a people's democratic state is possible only through revolution. As the Policy Statement put it:

'There are a large number of people who think that this Government can be replaced by a people's democratic Government by utilising the parliament ushered in by the new Constitution. Such feelings are encouraged and fed not only by this Government and the vested interests but even by the right-wing socialists, who preach that the very fact of a strong opposition party on the parliamentary floor will shake the Government and make it topple down'.

'But hardly had the people started to believe in the efficacy of the new Constitution, which they thought was the outcome of their anti-imperialist struggles of the past, that even the fiction of the fundamental rights and guarantees is thrown out of that very Constitution and the freedom of person, the press, speech and assembly, which the masses wanted to use to shake up this anti-democratic Government, are subjected to the rule of the police baton and the bureaucrats. Even a liberal would now feel ashamed to maintain, let alone the Communist Party and other democrats and revolutionaries, that this Government and the classes that keep it in power, will ever allow us to carry out a fundamental democratic transformation in the country by parliamentary methods alone. Hence, the road

that will lead us to freedom and peace, land and bread, as outlined in the Programme of the Party, has to be found elsewhere'.

'..... It is the reactionary ruling classes who resort to force and violence against the people and who pose for us the question whether our creed is violence or non-violence. Such a poser is a poser of Gandhian ideology which in practice misleads the masses and is a poser which we must steer clear of. Marxism and history have once for all decided the question for the party and the people of every country in the world long ago. All action of the masses in defence of their interests to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct. History sanctions all that the people decide to do, to clear the lumberwood of decadence and reaction in their path to progress and freedom'.

'After the Second Party Congress, differences and controversies arose inside the Party about the path that the Indian revolutionary movement must adopt. For a time it was advocated, that the main weapon in our struggle would be the weapon of general strike of industrial workers followed by countrywide insurrection, as in Russia. Later, on the basis of a wrong understanding of the lessons of the Chinese Revolution, the thesis was put forward that since ours is a semi-colonial country like China, our revolution would develop in the same way as in China, with partisan war of the peasantry, as its main weapon'.

'After a long discussion, running into several months, the Party has now arrived at a new understanding of the correct path for attaining the freedom of the country and the happiness of the people, a path which we do not and cannot name as either Russian or Chinese. It should be, and is, one that conforms to the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and that utilises the lessons given by all the struggles of history, especially the Russian and Chinese; the Russian because it was the first socialist revolution in the world carried out by the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of Lenin and Stalin in a capitalist and imperialist country; and the Chinese because it was the first people's democratic revolution in a semi-colonial, dependent country, under the leadership of the Communist Party, in which even the national bourgeoisie took part. At the same time, one has to remember that every country has its own peculiarities, natural and social, which cannot fail to govern its path to liberation'.

India's path cannot be the Russian path: since India has essentially an agrarian and backward economy, the immense importance of peasant struggles should not be minimised. So, political general strike in the cities and in industrial areas is not the main weapon of our revolution and such a general strike alone will not be enough to unleash countrywide insurrection leading to the overthrow of the present state.

India's path of revolution cannot be the Chinese path, as had been argued by some, that of partisan war leading to the establishment of liberation areas, and ultimately to liberation of cities, exactly in the same way as it happened in China. So the peasant partisan war would not be the main weapon to ensure the victory of the revolution.

'It will be neither only the Russian path nor the Chinese path but a path of Leninism applied to the Indian conditions'.

The Difference in the Situation in China and India

- In China, even to begin with, in 1927 itself, the Communist Party had an army of 30,000; but in India, this is not the case.
- 'China had no unified and good communications system, which prevented the enemy from carrying out concentrated and swift attacks on the liberation forces. India is different in this respect from China, in that it has a comparatively more unified, well-organised and far-flung system of communications. So the Indian ruling classes could easily and swiftly concentrate big forces against guerrilla areas and bases'.
  (India has also a more centralised administration. Capitalism in India has developed far more than in China at the comparable stage of the revolution. India was under a single imperialism while in China, different imperialist powers had different spheres of influence, and different warlords were at loggerheads with each other, and could not combine and concentrate against the revolutionary bases).
- 'India has a far bigger working class than China had during her march to freedom and it has a role to play which can be decisive in our struggle'.
- 'The Chinese Red Army was surrounded and threatened with annihilation again and again until it reached Manchuria. There, with the industrial base in hand, and the great friendly Soviet Union in the rear, the Chinese liberation army, free from the possibility of any attack in the rear, rebuilt itself, and launched the final offensive which led it to victory. The geographical situation in India in this respect, is altogether different'.
- 'This does not mean that there is nothing in common between us and China excepting the stage of our revolution and its main tasks. On the contrary, like China, India is of vast expanses. Like China, India has a vast peasant population. Our revolution, therefore, will have many features in common with the Chinese revolution. But peasant struggles along the Chinese path alone cannot lead to victory in India'.

'Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Chinese Party stuck to the peasant partisan war alone, not out of a principle but out of sheer necessity..... Because it happened so with the Chinese, why make their necessity into a binding principle for us, and fail to bring the working class into practical leadership and action in our liberation struggle?'

For the victory of the Indian revolution, partisan warfare of the peasants has to be combined with the other major weapon, that of the strikes of the working class, the general strike and uprisings in cities led by the detachments of the working class. The two basic factors of the revolution are—the partisan war of the peasants and the workers' uprisings in the cities.

Leading Role of the Working Class and Worker-Peasant Alliance

'While the previous line of reliance on the general strike in the cities neglected the role of the peasantry, the subsequent one of partisan struggle minimised the role of the working class (whom the peasants consider as their closest friend and ally), which in practice meant depriving the peasantry of its friend and leader. Both lines, in practice, meant ignoring the task of building the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, as the basis, of the united national front, and therefore ignoring the task of building the united national front and ignoring the task of putting the working class at the head of this front in the liberation struggle'.

'...The leadership of the working class is not realised only through the Party and its leadership of the peasant struggle but actually, in deeds, through the working class boldly championing the demands of the peasantry and coming to the assistance of the peasant struggles through its own action. The alliance must function in deed and fact, and not only in theory. The working class is the friend in action, that must help the fighting peasants and must ensure victory over the common enemy'.

'The working class, relying on agricultural workers and poor peasants, in firm alliance with the peasantry, together with the whole people, leads the battles in towns and rural areas to liberation, to land and bread, to work and peace'.

The working class can achieve its leading role through direct actions, not only for its demands but also for the demands of all exploited sections and classes, especially the peasantry, and by acting as the foremost champion of the general democratic movement.

The Party has to win over the majority of the workers in vital industries and build a powerful movement and organisation, based on shop committees.

'The Party has to build the unity of the working class and make it conscious of its tasks in relation to our entire people. The existing split in the working class movement which hampers the development of working class struggles must be overcome at all costs, in the shortest possible time, and united mass organisations of the working class built'.

'The class has also to be made politically conscious. Only a united and politically conscious working class can fulfil the role of the leadership of the people'.

'We have to rouse all sections of the peasantry including the rich peasantry, for the struggle for agrarian reform, and in the course of this struggle, rebuild the mass peasant organisations, basing ourselves firmly on the agricultural workers and poor peasants, who together constitute the majority of our agrarian population'.

A network of peasant and agricultural worker organisations in the villages, to lead and guide their struggles, are to be built. Volunteer squads of the most militant and conscious elements among them, have to be formed to defend the movement against the attacks of the enemy, which may develop into partisan squads as the movement develops onto higher levels.

'It must be understood that because of the vast expanse of our country, because of the uneven development of the agrarian crisis and of the working class and peasant movement, and the uneven state of organisation and consciousness of the peasant masses and the influence of the Party, the peasant movement will not develop at the same tempo everywhere, and different forms of organisation and struggle will have to be adopted depending on the maturity of the crisis, the degree of unification of the peasant masses and their mood, the strength and influence of the Party, and other factors'.

'All these tasks call for the most intense, patient and daily work among the masses, continuous agitation on our basic programme and the immediate, simple demands of the people, a concrete working out of such demands for every section of the people according to general and local conditions, practical leadership of mass struggles, a combination of various forms of struggles, and a systematic building up of a network of mass organisations'.

'Above all, it is necessary to build up through patient struggle a Communist Party equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, a party mastering strategy and tactics, a party practising self-criticism and strict discipline and which is closely linked with the masses'.

'The mass organisation and the Party that are built up must be able to withstand the fire of repression which the Government continually subjects them to and the people's movement'. While recruiting the best elements from the working class and other toiling classes into the Party and developing it into a mass party, it is necessary at the same time to exercise utmost vigilance against the swamping of the Party by elements that are not fully tested and trustworthy.'

Assessment of the Immediate Situation and Tasks

'Some say that the Government is thoroughly discredited and isolated, the people are ready to rise in revolt and in places are clashing with the Government which, with the blatant rule of police firing, has already created conditions of civil war in the country. Hence all our work must be guided by such an understanding of the situation'.

'It is true that people are becoming deeply distrustful of the Government and starting to consider it their enemy who is protecting the landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters of the people. Hence the masses are slowly rising in struggle, no longer able to withstand this state of slow starvation and death'. Hundreds of thousands are coming out in actions for their day-to-day demands, for food and adequate wages, for agrarian reforms and fair prices for agricultural produce, etc. But they still believe that the Government can be replaced by a real popular Government through general elections.'

'It would be a gross exaggeration to say that the country is already on the eve of armed insurrection or revolution, or that civil war is already raging in the country. If we were to read the situation in such a wrong manner, it would

lead us into adventurism and giving slogans to the masses keeping with the degree of their understanding and consciousness, and their preparedness, and the Government's isolation. Such slogans would isolate us from the people and hand over the masses to reformist disrupters'.

'Equally wrong are they who see only the disunity of the popular forces, only the offensive of reaction, and advocate a policy of retreat in the name of regrouping the forces, of eschewing all militant actions on the plea that this will invite repression. Tactics based on such an understanding of the situation will lead to betrayal of the masses and surrender before the enemy'.

'We have to lead the struggle of the people in the context of a sober evaluation of the situation. While it should not lead us into adventurism, we must also not forget that the crisis is not being solved but is growing. Hence, we cannot take a leisurely attitude and behave as if no deep crisis is moving the people and furious struggles are not looming ahead. Because insurrection and civil war do not exist, some would like to move and work as if they are living in a democracy with rights and liberties and nothing needs be done to make the Party prefect and the leadership of mass organisations from onslaughts of the law run mad. With such an outlook, we shall get smashed and will be able to build nothing'.

The Party has to lead the masses in their day-to day struggles and take them forward step by step, so that the people through their own experience, come to realise the necessity for revolutionary action.

'But because the crisis is growing, and even elementary actions like processions to voice their demands, lead to firing and bring thousands on to the streets, some would like to do away with the daily humdrum of running mass organisations. Taking fascism to be inevitable or already in power, they would scoff at parliamentary elections or fighting for civil liberties, for which broad sections of the people can and should be mobilised'.

The Party must not preach the inevitability of fascism but utilise the enormous volume of democratic opinion in the country to unite the people to halt the growing drive towards fascism on the part of the present Government. Through patient, systematic day-to-day work, through the bold championship of the demands of the people, through correct leadership of the concrete struggle of all sections of the people, the Party will grow and be able to fulfil its role as the organiser and leader of the people's democratic movement.

'We have to realise that although the masses are getting fast radicalised and moving into action in many parts of the country, the growth of the mass movement has not kept pace with the growth of discontent against the present Government and its policies and methods. To ascribe this to repression alone would be wrong. This weakness of the mass movement is due, above all, to the weakness of our Party and the division in the camp of the progressive forces. The Party must strive to overcome this division and must stress the supreme need for unity of all progressive forces, build this unity in action and itself grow into a mass party, by drawing the best elements into its fold from the fighting masses'.

'We must fight the parliamentary elections and elections in every sphere where the broad strata of the people can be mobilised and their interests defended. We must be wherever the masses are and would like us to be'.

It may be mentioned here that certain parts of the tactical document, including some questions and answers during the discussions between our Party's delegation and the Commission of the Central Committee, CPSU, were not included in the 'Statement of Policy', as the omitted parts dealt with the elaboration of some theoretical issues and principles, which go more to explain the theoretical-ideological basis for the 'Statement of Policy', than forming a part of the same directly. To be truthful to the historical facts regarding the said fraternal discussions and decisions between the representatives of our Central Committee and the Central Committee of the CPSU headed by Comrade Stalin, and also to prevent any distortion of the meaning of the 'Statement of Policy' by right or left opportunists, I produce below the omitted portions-portions dealing with explanations and questions and answers. The readers, I hope, can easily understand that all these were discussions and decisions in the background of a grave inner-party crisis, centering round the issues of the Indian revolution, its specific path and the role of different classes and forms of struggle—all thrown up during the Telangana armed struggle during the years of 1948-1950. Then alone can the problems discussed be correctly grasped in their historical perspective.

Partisan Struggle—A Marxist Leninist Understanding Partial Partisan Struggle

As the crisis matures; as the unity, consciousness and organisation of the masses grow, as the strength and influence of the Party develops and as the enemy resorts to more and more ruthless measures to crush the agrarian movement, the question of when, where and how to resort to arms will be more and more forced on to the agenda. As the question is one of immense practical importance, it is absolutely necessary that the Party is able to give a clear and unambiguous answer to it.

It must be realised that because of the vast area of India, because of the uneven level of mass consciousness and mass movement in different parts of the country, uneven acuteness of the agrarian crisis and uneven strength and influence of the Party itself, the peasant movement cannot develop at the same tempo everywhere. Premature uprisings and adventurist actions of every type must be undoubtedly eschewed. At the same time, it would be wrong to lay down that armed defensive action in the form of partisan warfare should be resorted to in every specific area only when the movement in all parts of the country rises to the level of uprisings. On the contrary, in the course of the development of the movement, the situation may arise in several areas which would demand armed struggle in the form of partisan warfare. For example, in a big and

topographically suitable area where the peasant movement has risen to the level of seizure of land and foodgrains, the question as to how to effect that seizure and how to defend the land so seized, will become a burning and live question. The Party is of the opinion that partisan warfare in such a situation, undertaken on the basis of a genuine mass peasant movement and the firm unity, under the leadership of the Party, of the peasant masses, especially the most oppressed and exploited strata, combined with other forms of struggle such as social boycott of landlords, most no-rent struggle, agricultural workers' strike, can, if correctly organised and led, have a rousing and galvanising effect on the peasant masses in many other areas, and raise their own struggles to a higher level.

Wherever such partisan struggles develop, they must also be combined with mass actions of the working class, especially in the neighbouring areas, in the form of strikes and demonstrations. Undertaken on the basis of the most careful preparation and assessment of all factors, the partisan struggles must be conducted with the utmost boldness and tenacity, defending the gains of the movement by every means at our disposal.

At the same time, the Party has to act with the utmost flexibility when overwhelming forces of the enemy are concentrated against the partisan areas and the partisan forces run into danger of defeat and total annihilation.

Partisan Struggle as Part of Liberation Struggle

Partisan areas will inevitably arise in various parts of the country as the crisis deepens and as the mass peasant movement rises to the level of revolutionary seizure of land and foodgrains, paralysing and wiping out the local forces oppressing them. However, they will continuously face the danger of encirclement and annihilation at the hands of the enemy. Even the coming into existence of liberated territories with their own armed forces in several parts of the country, will not eliminate this danger because these areas will themselves be surrounded by hostile forces from all sides. Therefore, partisan war alone, no matter how widely extended, cannot ensure victory over the enemy in the concrete situation prevailing in India.

When the maturing crisis gives rise to partisan struggles on a wide scale, when the partisan forces in several areas are battling against the enemy, the workers in the cities, in the vital industries and especially in the transport system, will have to play a decisive role. The onslaught of the enemy against the partisan forces, against liberated areas, will have to be hampered and paralysed by mass strike actions of the working class. With hundreds of streams of partisan struggles merging with the general strike and uprising of workers in the cities, the enemy will find it impossible to concentrate his forces anywhere and defeat the revolutionary forces, but will himself face defeat and annihilation. Even inside the armed forces of the Government, the crisis will grow and big sections will join the forces of revolution.

Partisan Struggle and Individual Terrorism

In spite of the offensive nature of the partisan struggle, it is necessary to emphasise in our agitation and propaganda in the initial period, the defensive nature of partisan struggle, saying that the objective of the partisan struggle is above all to defend the peasants from the attacks of the Government and its punitive organs. In doing so, special attention should be paid to the demands for which the peasants are fighting and to the atrocities of the Government which force the peasants to take to arms. It is necessary, at the same time, to point out that it is the Government that is responsible for the violence and bloodshed.

Partisan struggle is frequently confused with individual terrorism. It is asserted that individual terrorism is a part of partisan struggle and not only a part, but even a basis of the partisan struggle. This is absolutely wrong. What is more, individual terrorism contradicts the spirit and objective of partisan struggle. And it is absolutely incompatible with partisan struggle. In the first place, the objective of individual terrorism is to destroy particular individuals while not pursuing the aim of destroying the regime of feudal exploitation and subjugation of the people, whereas the objective of partisan struggle is not to destroy particular individuals, but to destroy the hated regime, in a prolonged struggle of the popular masses. In the second place, individual terrorism is carried out by individual terrorists or by a small squad of terrorists, acting apart from the masses and without any link with the struggle of the masses, whereas the partisan struggle is carried on in close contact with the struggle of the masses against the existing regime.

Since individual terrorism is directed against particular individuals and not against the regime, it creates in the minds of the masses a harmful illusion as if it would be possible to destroy the regime by destroying individual representatives of the regime, that what matters is not the destruction of the regime but the destruction of individual representatives of the regime, that the main evil is not the existence of the regime, but the existence of the particular; worst representatives of the regime whom it is precisely necessary to destroy. It is clear that such a feeling created by individual terrorism can only weaken the onslaught of the masses against the regime and thus facilitate the struggle of the Government against the people. Therein lies the first major harm done by individual terrorism to the people's partisan movement.

Since individual terrorism is carried out not by the masses but by individual terrorists acting apart from the masses, individual terrorism leads to an undue minimisation of the role of the mass movement and to equally undue exaggeration of the role of the terrorists, who are alleged to be capable of securing the liberation of the people by their own forces, independent of the growth of the mass partisan movement. It is clear that such a feeling created by individual terrorism can only cultivate passivity among the popular masses and thereby undermine the development of the partisan struggle. Therein lies the second major harm done by individual terrorism to the revolutionary movement.

To sum up: Individual terrorism undermines the possibility of unleashing the partisan struggle of the masses and it should be rejected as harmful and dangerous.

Some Questions Relating to Partisan War and Individual Terrorism

QUESTION: Is it correct to resort to partisan war in one particular area where the conditions are ripe for it, even though other rural areas are not ripe for it, and the workers are not ready to support it with mass actions?

ANSWER: Yes, you can and should resort to it. To start or not, does not depend on us. It depends on the organisational state of the masses and their mood. If the masses are ready, you must start it.

QUESTION: Have we to take up partisan struggle only when the peasant struggle for partial demands reaches the stage of land distribution and establishing of village peasant committees? Or can we take it up when the movement is still in the stage of struggle for partial demands, for example, rent reduction?

ANSWER: The partisan struggle also has stages. It starts with smaller demands—let us say, reduction of rent, it is not yet a partisan struggle. If the enemy refuses to grant the demands and the peasant is eager to win it by force, then partisan struggles can start. True, it is not the struggle for seizure of land but only for a reduction of rent, still it will be partisan struggle.

Hence, it does not depend on us. If the masses are ready and eager, we should assist them.

QUESTION: Can partisan warfare even of the most elementary type be developed in areas where communications are well-developed?

ANSWER: Yes, when encirclement occurs, transfer the best forces to another area. Lead out the armed forces so as to join it with the armed forces in another area, so as to create a liberation army of your own.

QUESTION: The aim of the partisan struggle must be liquidation of the enemy's armed forces with the active assistance of the masses of peasants. To kill individual oppressors with a view to terrorising all the other oppressors and making them renounce their oppression is terrorism. But I cannot understand the complete banning of any individual action against any oppressor landlord, notorious official or a spy, as a matter of principle, under the name of terrorism. In my opinion, at times, it becomes necessary in the earlier phase of the partisan struggle, to organise individual actions against some notorious oppressors, not in order to terrorise other oppressors into renouncing their oppression but to guard the safety of the partisan squads. I am unable to understand how such actions make the people passive. As I understand international literature, such individual actions were conducted by partisans against German and Japanese fascists in the occupied countries during the anti fascist war, and they are being done even now in Asian countries where partisan warfare is going on—Malaya, Burma, Indo-China, etc. If I remember rightly, such actions were not only not banned by

Lenin in his article on partisan warfare but on the other hand, he severely criticised the Mensheviks who condemned them as anarchism. I seek clarification on this point.

ANSWER: The comrade says he cannot understand why individual terrorism should slow down the action of the masses. Individual terrorism is called so not merely because it is directed against individual oppressors but also because it is carried out by individuals or groups irrespective of the masses. Individual terrorism creates the illusion that the main evil is not the regime but individuals; that only if a few more are destroyed, the regime will be finished off. What conclusions will the masses draw? That with the help of terrorism of this type, it is possible to destroy the regime after a long struggle. And if such conclusions are drawn by the peasants, they will say, 'No use developing the struggle against the regime. Our glorious terrorists will do the job'. Such sentiment weakens the onslaught of the masses against the regime. Therefore, it is harmful and dangerous.

Individual terrorism creates the belief that the main force lies in the heroic terrorists and not in the masses. The role of the masses becomes to watch and applaud. That means to cultivate passivity. Marx and Engels taught that the liberation of the masses has to be won by the masses themselves. That is what you ought to tell them. Different results follow from individual terrorism. The masses look to the terrorists as heroes and liberators.

The comrade's reference to Lenin is without foundation. We can give him articles by Lenin which are directed against individual terrorism. You must know how hard Lenin hit the Mensheviks when the revolution was at an ebb and they took to terror.

The theory of individual terrorism comes to the front when the revolution recedes. It is a reflection of the weakness of the movement. Whenever the revolutionary movement is rising and the masses themselves rise, the theory of individual terrorism disappears from the horizon. The comrade must bear that in mind.

Telangana Armed Struggle and its Perspective

The delegation of our Central Committee, which had the benefit of discussions with the leaders of the Central Committee, CPSU, and Comrade Stalin, did also report to our Central Committee, the gist of its discussions regarding Telangana. The Commission of the CPSU was appreciative of the Telangana armed partisan resistance, which originally began as a peasant movement over certain partial economic demands and finally developed into an armed liberation struggle to overthrow the rule of the Nizam in the Hyderabad State. It was to the credit of the Telangana peasantry and the Communist party that gave leadership to this struggle.

But, after the rule of the Nizam was overthrown by the Indian Union armies

in September 1948 and the State of Hyderabad was merged in the Indian Union, it was sectarian and incorrect to continue it as a liberation struggle, against the regime of the Indian Union, for establishing People's Democracy. The correlation of class forces and the obtaining political situation did not permit such a slogan, as a slogan of immediate action.

But it was absolutely correct to defend the gains of the Telangana peasantry through armed partisan struggle when those gains of the peasantry, i.e., land and other democratic liberties, were under attack by the Union Government and its armed forces. It would have been proper and correct to have carried this armed partisan struggle, as a partial struggle for the defence of the peasants' lands, and mobilised the widest democratic support to such a just struggle, while expressing readiness to settle the land question of the Telangana peasantry through negotiations and discussions. That would have strengthened the hands of the fighting people and partisans of Telangana, while isolating the Indian Government which was unjustly attacking the peasants and supporting the feudal landlords. However, the Telangana armed partisan struggle, instead of being fought as a partial struggle for land, was wrongly directed as a liberation war against the Congress regime, and hence did not succeed in securing wider support, to isolate the attacking Indian Government and its armies.

It was also observed that in the then prevailing situation, it was unfortunate that the Telangana armed partisan resistance could not be defended and continued. The time had come to withdraw the armed partisan struggle, and it was for the leadership of the Indian Communist Party, to decide on what terms to withdraw it and negotiate, and how long it had to be continued to secure suitable terms, and when exactly to withdraw the armed resistance, etc. Undue prolongation of the Telangana armed partisan struggle in the absence of mass peasant upsurge in support of the partisan struggle, might raise the danger of its deteriorating into squad or individual terrorism.

May 1951 - Central Committee Meeting and its Decisions

This Central Committee meeting was convened to apprise the Central Committee of the discussions held by our delegation with the leaders of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, and to take necessary political-organisational decisions. Rajeswar Rao and the Polit Bureau which was elected in May 1950 had submitted their resignation on the grounds that their continuation was not congenial for the reunification of the Party, in order to carry out the newly chalked out Party line. The Polit Bureau was reconstituted and Ajay Kumar Ghosh was elected the General Secretary of the Central Committee.

The May 1951 meeting of the Central Committee, after a thorough discussion of the Telangana situation, adopted a resolution, the full text of which we reproduce below. The Control Committee meeting also decided to ask the Central Committee members from Andhra to go to the areas of armed partisan struggle

in Telangana, in order to discuss with the squad leaders and organisers of the local committees, and find out whether they were in a position to continue the partisan resistance until the Party was able to bargain favourable terms from the Government for the withdrawal of the armed struggle. The Central Committee was of the view that two basic conditions had to be fulfilled before the decision to withdraw could be taken. They were (a) the land that was in the possession of the peasants should not be taken away and handed them over to the landlords; (b) all warrants and cases against the leaders of the struggle should be withdrawn and all prisoners released, and the ban on the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha should be lifted.

It was very correct on the part of the Central Committee to decide, that on no serious mass struggles, and especially one like the armed peasant struggle of Telangana, should final decisions be taken without proper consultations and discussions with the direct participants and leaders of the struggle. The Central Committee members from Andhra had met separately to assess the situation anew before they were to go to the areas in Telangana to meet and discuss with the local partisan leaders. Though there were some differences amongst them initially in the matter of further conducting the Telangana struggle, they were able to overcome these differences and go unitedly before the Party ranks and the people.

The May 1951 Central Committee meeting, also countermanded the disciplinary action on Ravi Narayan Reddy, expelling him from the Party for his clandestine desertion from an underground shelter of the Party. But it disapproved of his action of desertion, endangering the safety of other comrades, and also sharply criticised his document *Naked Truth of Telangana* and its circulation—a document that slandered the Telangana armed struggle after September 1948. Ravi Narayan Reddy took his party membership according to the decision of the Central Committee, but continued his anti-Telangana propaganda, contrary to the decisions and directives of the Central Committee.

1951 May - C.C. Resolution on Telangana (Retranslated from Telugu)

(Note: Some papers and some persons are propagating that the Central Committee in its resolution has denounced the Telangana people's movement as terrorism and anarchist. If one goes through the resolution, it becomes crystal clear that this propaganda is utterly baseless and slanderous. We are releasing the full text of the C. C. resolution, to clear the confusion that is being created among the people by the propaganda being indulged in by some newspapers and some persons. -Andhra Provincial Committee)

In the Party, as well as in certain circles which are friendly to the Telangana peasants' struggle, there have arisen certain doubts and questions about the policies and methods that have been adopted during these five years of struggle or are to be adopted.

The Central Committee considers that it is the right and duty of Party units and Party members from all over India to make their suggestions to the Central Committee about the policies, tactics and methods to be adopted in the Telangana struggle, But the Central Committee wants to emphatically state that it is mainly the people, the people of Telangana, who started this glorious struggle against feudal exploitation, for land and freedom, who carried on this struggle facing untold sufferings, that have mainly to decide these issues. The Communist Party of India is proud to declare that it is standing hand in hand with the Telangana people who were heroically carrying on the fight against exploitation and that the Party is leading this struggle. The Communist Party, unlike the Congress party, is not a party that, irrespective of people's opinions and close cooperation and consent, can initiate any struggle, or continue, restrict or withdraw it.

During the last three years, all progressive forces in our country have realised that the boastful claims that the Indian Union army's action was intended only to end the hated Nizam's feudal rule and to usher in democratic rule, are utterly false. Through hundreds of meetings, demonstrations, memoranda, they demanded and forced the Government to stay the hangings of the 12 Telangana heroes and commute their death sentences. The selfish reactionaries who were behind the Indian Government, were effectively able to prevent land reforms being enacted, abolishing feudal landlordism, giving land to the tiller and thus solving the people's food problem.

In this situation, to defend the Telangana people's movement; to defend the land in the possession of the lakhs of agricultural labourers and the peasants; to defend their right to reduced rates of interest and of rent; to defend their freedom from forced labour and forced levies—all these won by their heroic struggles—is the real way for achieving agrarian reforms, and not by giving paper promises.

At the same time, the Central Committee declares that it is ready to arrive at an agreement through negotiations, to solve this problem, to safeguard and to defend the interests of the people and of the peasants of Telangana, and to restore peaceful conditions.

Some circles believe that the Telangana struggle was being carried on to overthrow the Nehru Government. But these circles forget that the Telangana peasantry, as early as in 1944, long before the Nehru Government was established, was carrying on *a* struggle against the Nizam and feudal landlord exploitation. The Nehru Government armies, which entered on the plea of ending Nizam's rule, joined hand-in-glove with the Nizam, and brought back the landlords. The same struggle in defence of the peasants' interests against the landlords is being carried on even after the establishment of the Nehru Government. So it is necessary to clarify that the Telangana struggle was not started, nor is it being continued, to overthrow Nehru's Government but only to end the feudal exploitation. Everybody desiring progressive development of the country agrees that it is necessary to struggle to the end exploitation of the feudal landlord. Because it

is on the success of that struggle that everyone can be assured of his daily food, daily work for livelihood, progress and freedom.

Keeping this in view,

1. the Central Committee directs the Polit Bureau to review the Telangana problem and adopt all ways and measures to make the Telangana struggle successful.
2. It appeals to all Party members and Party units to popularise the demands of the Telangana peasants and to mobilise the people, workers and peasants, against the atrocities and repression that are rampant in Telangana.
3. It appeals to all democratic forces and elements to raise their voice and to defend the Telangana people from the military attacks and atrocities.
4. It appeals to all to mobilise the people in support of the following demands of the Telangana peasants:

Demands

- All the lands that are being cultivated by the agricultural labourers and the peasants must not be disturbed and their possession by ownership (*patta*) rights must be confirmed. No peasant and agricultural labourer cultivating land should be evicted from the land he has been cultivating. The lands forcibly seized from the peasants should be restored to them.
- People living in the forest areas must be free to utilise the forest produce, freely, for their own personal use and for sale. They must be allowed to freely cultivate the lands in the forests, under the supervision of their elected panchayats.
- All village affairs should be conducted by the panchayats elected by all men and women.
- Withdrawal of all the armed personnel and disbanding of the home-guards.
- Release of the convicted and detained political prisoners, all those connected with the Telangana movement. Withdrawal of all pending cases and warrants. Cancellation of all collective fines.
- Withdrawal of the ban on the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party. Restoration of civil liberties.
- The question of abolishing the Nizam dynasty's rule as well as the Hyderabad State, and its merger into the united Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka linguistic States, to be left to be decided by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise of the people of the Hyderabad State.

But this resolution as well as the change of central leadership of the Party was taken as a green signal for a full-fledged campaign by the Ravi Narayan Reddy section in Telangana, and by the Open Party Headquarters Forum section on an all-India scale, in favour of total and unconditional withdrawal of the Telangana struggle and to eliminate the fighting cadre from the leadership at all levels. They had started a campaign that the Central Committee had already withdrawn the struggle. Only the Andhra leaders (the Bezwada clique), were

persisting in carrying on the struggle. The struggle was nothing more than individual terrorism and anarchist deeds.

The Party Headquarters Open Forum and the group formed by Ravi Narayan Reddy to denounce the Telangana armed struggle after the entry of the Indian army had been systematically carrying on the propaganda that both the all-India leadership and the Andhra leadership had adopted this terroristic method of revolution, guerrilla struggle with small squads, at the instance of the Yugoslav delegation that attended the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India, in February 1948. O. P. Sangal, a follower of P. C. Joshi then, was the propagator of this slander. It is as much a dirty slander as that of the Indian Government that the Communists joined hands with the Razakars. For the enemies of the revolutionary struggle any stick is good enough to beat the Communists with.

In Telangana itself, the Hyderabad city group, Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy group and some of the Telangana leaders released from jail, held a conference and formed a Preparatory Committee and announced withdrawal of the Telangana struggle, and decided to participate in the forthcoming elections. The Polit Bureau, under the pressure of the mounting all-India campaign of this group for open withdrawal of the struggle, announced a negotiating committee with the Government for withdrawal of the struggle. The All-India Kisan Sabha called for the withdrawal of the struggle. Ajay Kumar Ghosh threatened that unless the Telangana struggle was withdrawn immediately, he would be forced to issue a statement disowning it. Maddukuri Chandrasekhara Rao, who was the then Secretary of the Andhra Committee, had to retort to him that in that case, they, the leaders of the Telangana movement, would be forced to disown him and his leadership—a threat that kept him in check. The leaders heading the Telangana movement trekked long distances into the forest areas to explain the new understanding and sound out the squads on whether they would be able to continue till the minimum guarantee for the Telangana fighters' safety and the guarantee of land that still was in the hands of the peasants, could be extracted from the Government. Some of them could return only by September end.

Meanwhile more arrests had taken place in Hyderabad city and more of the underground shelters were blown up. Many of the leaders in jail openly started saying that they were for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the struggle. After such declarations they were released and joined vociferously in the campaign demanding the withdrawal. But the Government of India told the negotiating committee and the intermediaries that there was no use of these declarations unless the fighting committee headed by the 'Bezwada clique' announced withdrawal. The hunt for the guerrilla squads was continued relentlessly. Meanwhile the Karimnagar-Adilabad area committee and the Palvancha area committee, too, called for withdrawal.

Another important factor to be noted was, that with the general elections nearing, the Congress and legal People's Democratic Front cadres had gone to the Telangana villages and started campaigning. They started saying that if our

guerrillas gave up their actions, even here in Telangana, the police camps would be removed, our squads and leaders would be allowed to come back to the villages and be allowed to participate in the elections. We would vote for the party and defeat the Congress. These constant raids and beatings would end. In the Andhra area, as early as June-July, the cadres were released from jails. They started preparing for the elections. Comrade A.K. Gopalan toured the villages, denouncing police repression and demanding withdrawal of the arrest warrants against the leaders. Red flags started fluttering in hundreds of villages. In that situation, the Andhra Provincial Committee, which was also leading the Telangana armed struggle, allowed them to go in for participating in the elections. Members and squad leaders from Andhra who had been fighting in the forest region of Krishna along with the Telangana guerrilla squads, left the areas and went back to Andhra to participate in the elections.

The leadership of the Telangana armed struggle then consisted of Rajeshwar Rao, M. Basavapunniah, Maddukuri Chandrasekhar Rao, P. Sundarayya, Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao (D. V.), and Bheemireddi Narasimha Reddi (B. N.).

D. Venkateswara Rao, after attending the Central Committee meeting, accepted the new understanding and gave his consent for withdrawal, and went to the Godavari forest area in June 1951 to meet the guerrillas and explain the new understanding and the decision of the new Central Committee. Comrade B. Narasimha Reddy had gone to the same forest region even earlier in March 1951. Comrade P. Sundarayya had gone to Amarabad forest region and returned.

On October 20, except these two, the other four comrades met and anxiously debated for long, coming to the conclusion that under these conditions, there was no possibility of getting even the minimum terms and any further continuation would put the fighting cadres and squads into greater danger. It was better to withdraw unconditionally, taking the Government at its word that amnesty for cadres, and assurance of land for the peasant, would come after the withdrawal.

The Factors that Led to this Decision

Even during the Central Committee discussions in May 1951, the Central Committee members who were in the leadership of the Telangana movement, in spite of initial differences expressed by some, had agreed that the Telangana armed struggle, even as partial partisan struggle in defence of land, could not be continued for long and should be withdrawn, getting the most favourable terms possible. The factors that made them come to this conclusion were:

First and foremost was the factor that in the very bastions of the Telangana movement, Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal districts, in all the plains areas, the mass participation had become less and less, though the mass sympathies were with the fighting guerrillas. The party and the Andhra Mahasabha organisers, guerrilla squads, all were forced to leave that area and retreat to the distant forest areas. Raids from the forest bases by the guerrilla squads, the help they received

from the people in their actions against landlords and enemy agents, prevented the landlords and the government from stabilising their rule, and restoring a 'normal situation', i. e., landlord exploitation. But these could never overcome the failure of the masses not participating or their lessening participation in actual struggles.

If one compares this with the mass participation during 1947–1948 against the Nizam and his *Razakars*, and even for a period following the Indian army intervention, or of the first spontaneous mass upsurge and response in the newly extended areas in late 1949 and early 1950, this factor of lessening mass participation becomes quite patent.

In the new areas, to where the Party and *Sangham* organisers and the guerrilla squads had retreated and routed the masses, in the initial stages the masses had responded, as in the koya tribal belt, or near the Mahbubnagar forest region, and more spectacularly in Karimnagar district. But when the Government sent its military and police and established camps, this first spontaneous mass response subsided. Once again, squad actions had become the main form of resistance. In the Godavari forest region, we had seen how the whole koya population was physically uprooted from the forest belt to the concentration camps on the outskirts of the forests.

The second factor was that the guerrilla squads, faced with an increasing network of military and police camps, and with less and less mass participation, had become less and less effective in their actions on their enemy's armed personnel, the military, the police and the armed home-guards. Apart from the protective forest areas—and there too—as the enemy increased its camps and fire power in all areas, the actions against the armed personnel had become fewer and fewer. Squad actions were being directed more and more against individual enemy agents and individual landlords: and if the armed struggle was continued, the danger of the whole thing deteriorating into individual terrorism was quite evident. If the main action is not against the armed forces of the ruling classes but against individual landlords and their agents, one of the essential features of the partial partisan guerrilla movement is lost.

The fire-power of the guerrillas and their military skill, as against the armed forces of the ruling classes, instead of increasing both in quantity and effectiveness, had become weaker.

Thirdly, while the peasants held possession of a greater portion of *anyakrantalu*, leased land, and practically the whole of the waste land brought under cultivation, they had lost possession of most of the surplus land seized. Even on the lands in their possession, they were forced to pay rent, though in many cases, it might be very small and even token. These could not be recovered or continue to be defended by armed defence for much longer.

Fourthly, the ruling classes in the whole country had strengthened their position, having overcome the initial enormous difficulties that they had faced immediately after the transfer of power. The high tide of the postwar mass upsurge

had been ebbing rapidly, as was evidenced by the fact that in no part of the country, neither Telangana-like movements were going on nor even mass struggles of the 1947–1948 intensity and character. There were also no important solidarity actions and aid campaigns in defence of the Telangana struggle, in the rest of the country.

Fifthly, in the difficult situation facing the Telangana movement, and in the face of the unimaginable military and police torture and terror, sharp differences in the leadership once again had come up as to the future conduct of the movement. The most notorious example of this had been Ravi Narayan Reddy's stealthy desertion of his underground shelter and his joining of the Open Forum of the Party Headquarters at Bombay in its public slander campaign against the Telangana movement. The whole political and tactical line that was being pursued by the new Polit Bureau elected in May 1950 was under attack by the Ajay-Dange-Ghate leadership from Bombay, the legal Party headquarters. Sixthly, in the fighting areas, among the guerrilla leaders themselves, differences started accumulating and desertions began, even from amongst the squad and centre organisers. This took a serious turn when a small group headed by Dayam Rajireddi in Manukota-Illendu area, tried to organise a revolt, and failing, he and a few others deserted to the enemy. That was a serious warning signal.

Finally, with the clear understanding obtained about the need to distinguish between partial partisan struggles and partisan warfare as part of a liberation struggle, it had been easier for the leaders of the Telangana movement to chalk out the future course of tactics regarding Telangana.

We should have realised that the Telangana armed struggle which had developed and was being waged as a liberation struggle against the Nizam, was no more a liberation struggle when the Indian army intervened and the Hyderabad State became a part of the Indian State. It had become a peasant partisan armed struggle to defend the possession of the land which was in the hands of the peasants, i.e., a partial partisan struggle. Then, we would have, while conducting the armed defence, adopted quite flexible tactics to achieve as many concessions as possible, worked for settlement, and fared far better, retreating in time.

We had carried on the armed defence to breaking point.

These were the factors that made the Control Committee members who were heading the Telangana movement, agree to the Central Committee resolution of May 1951. Our hope and ardent desire was that the whole Party would unitedly defend and stand by the Telangana struggle and try to get those minimum terms which would enable withdrawal of the armed struggle, retaining the maximum gains that were possible at that time and in that situation.

But the development of events after the Central Committee resolution, narrated above, dashed whatever prospects there were for achieving this, and hence the inevitable decision for unconditional withdrawal.

The resolutions passed at the Amarabad Regional Communists' and Guerrillas'

Conference on November 21, 1951, endorsing this decision, correctly reflect this situation and we are giving them below:

Resolution on Withdrawal of Armed Struggle

For the last five years the Telangana people have been waging an armed struggle, under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party, against the Nizam Nawab and the landlords, for land and for national freedom. When the Nizam Nawab's regime was about to collapse, the armies of the Congress Government entered Hyderabad, on the plea of putting an end to the Nizam *Razakars*, but in reality engaged in destroying the gains of the Telangana people. They kept the Nizam Nawab as Rajpramukh. They started seizing lands from the Telangana peasantry and handing over their possession to the *deshmukhs* and the landlords.

The Telangana people, under the leadership of their Party, resisted the Nehru army's attacks and defended their lands. During the last 3 years, even though Nehru's armies subjected hundreds of thousands of people to brutal tortures, raped thousands of women, burnt village after village, forced tribal people to vacate their villages and put them in concentration camps (new settlement villages outside the forests, with military guard all round), shot dead about 2,000 guerrillas, Party and people's leaders, and the militant supporters of the Party, the Telangana people were able to defend and retain many of their gains.

- They have retained possession of an overwhelming portion of the leased land and continue to cultivate it.
- They have retained some portion of the surplus lands of the big landlords, which they had occupied, though a major portion was snatched back by these big landlords with the military and police help. But even these lands which the big landlords seized could not all be cultivated, a large portion of it is being kept as waste and uncultivated land.
- The Telangana peasants were cultivating and enjoying the fruit of all the waste lands, *poramboke*, *banjar* or forest reserve lands.
- They were enjoying the forest produce for free.
- They were free from the oppressive day-to-day rule and action of *patels* and *patwaris* and forest guards.
- They stopped forced labour being extracted by the landlords. The big landlords could not dare stay in the villages and had run to the towns and to the police camps, and were economically in a far weakened position.

Five years of armed guerrilla struggle carried on by the Telangana people, made them tremendously conscious and determined to stand up for their rights, and for a new life.

The Andhra Mahasabha had become the organisation (united front) of the Telangana people, and the Communist Party has become the Telangana people's party, winning their love and confidence.

The Telangana peasant armed guerrilla struggle has shown to all the people of India, in practice, a new way of how to fight for land, for food and for real freedom.

The Telangana people's struggle has helped to expose the real character of Nehru's Congress Government on a world scale, and won the appreciation of the progressive peoples of the world.

The Nehru Government felt that it could not wipe out the Telangana people's armed resistance and if it continued further, they were afraid that many Telanganas might arise in several parts of India. They decided to carry on negotiations, so as to get the Telangana armed struggle withdrawn, and prepared to concede certain concessions.

But in the Telangana people's struggle, in conducting it, there remained some mistakes:

The Telangana peasantry was fighting for land, for the national unity of the Andhra people and for their freedom against the Nizam Nawab. But we wrongly construed it as the beginning of the people's armed struggle for liberation, which has to be an all-India struggle, to overthrow Nehru's Congress Government. Because of this error, we were unable to counteract Nehru's propaganda in time, and mobilise all democratic sections of India in support of the Telangana people's struggle and just demands.

We failed to build up the necessary secret mass organisations, and secret Party organisation, that could maintain day-to-day unbroken contact with the people, under whatever repression and terror, which was essential for any serious people's struggle. Because of this, we were unable to mobilise the people to participate more and more in the struggle against Nehru's army, in defence of their gains and demands.

Our guerrilla attacks were mainly directed, not against the armed personnel of the Government but tended to be against the Government agents, the landlords and other enemies of the people.

We failed to develop sufficiently rapidly, the military skill of the guerrillas and also the political and theoretical level of the Party members and organisers.

Under these conditions, the Party decided to withdraw guerrilla actions, if the peasants were not evicted from the lands, and if all those political prisoners connected with the Telangana people's struggle were released, all arrest warrants were withdrawn; all cases pending against them were withdrawn, the ban on the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha was removed, the military and other armed personnel were withdrawn and civil liberties were restored. We thought using such respite and utilising these opportunities, we could overcome our weaknesses and could carry the Telangana people's movement to a new high level, and strengthen it many times more with new tactics.

But, the inner-Party discussions that plagued the Party during the last two years, have caused irreparable harm to the Telangana peasant armed struggle.

Wrong arguments and propaganda were carried on that the Telangana people's movement was nothing but individual terrorism or squad actions, and that the people were not participating in it.

The Central Committee passed a resolution on the basis of the new Party Programme and new tactical line. But in complete contradiction to it, the Polit Bureau issued an open public statement condemning individual terror and squad actions. It helped only the above-mentioned slander campaign and caused only harm to the Telangana cause.

Releasing to the press that portion of the Central Committee resolution, that we were ready for negotiated settlement, led the Government to consider that we were on our last legs and were ready to surrender, and so stiffened its attitude.

V. D. Deshpande (Marathwada Communist leader) went to the Home and Police Minister Seshadri Ayyangar of the Hyderabad Government and denounced the whole Telangana movement as terrorism. In Telangana, under the leadership of Ravi Narayan Reddy, V. D. Deshpande and Arutla Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy, a rival party group, calling itself the Convention Group, started functioning. Some of these of the Convention Group and some of the detenus in jails, had told Vellodi, the Chief Administrator of the state, that they were ready to withdraw the struggle, and for *a* compromise. The Central Kisan Council (under the leadership of Z. A. Ahmed) and the All-Hyderabad Kisan Committee (under the leadership of Arutla Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy) passed resolutions condemning the Telangana movement as individual terrorism. All these helped the Government to feel that they were on top and could afford to be adamant.

As for the Central Committee resolution, a solidarity campaign supporting the demands of the Telangana people could not be carried on, in the whole of India, except in Andhra.

Under these circumstances, with our weaknesses on the one hand, and with increasing differences and split in the Party on the other hand, though we were unable to get the minimum conditions from the Government we had expected, we were forced to adopt new tactics to defend the gains of the Telangana people's struggle and to carry it forward. For this purpose, the decision to stop guerrilla actions, taken by the Provincial Committee, is endorsed by this meeting.

In the same manner and with the same skill with which one has to lead the movement when it is surging forward, one has to retreat boldly taking the initiative and adopting necessary steps, when unfavourable conditions force one to beat a retreat. We need not despair because of this retreat. On the basis of our experience of the movement, on the basis of our deep roots among the people, on the basis of the new Programme and new tactical line, we are confident that we will overcome the weaknesses in the Telangana movement and develop the Telangana people's movement many times more powerfully by winning national unity and freedom. We swear that we will carry out our part in the people's democratic movement in India.

On Protection of Cadre

During the last five years of the Telangana guerrilla struggle, those experienced cadre who underwent many trials and tribulations, who now in the field number about 650, including 233 in this region—all these are the priceless capital of our movement. it is absolutely essential to take all necessary steps to protect and preserve these cadres.

As per the new tactics, we have to dissolve the guerrilla squads, regroup them into political squads and let them function such. While the Government continues to ban our *Sangham* and our Party, and continues to wipe out our cadre, our squads and cadre face a great threat from the enemy. So it is necessary to give the necessary instruments to them for self-defence. We must re-organise the squads, mixing judiciously the military and political squad members, so as to enable them to effectively carry out political and organisational responsibilities.

These squads have to take every technical precaution, while carrying out their programme. If the police or the landlord goondas come to apprehend them, they must take every appropriate measure for self-defence and protection.

The cadre will be facing a serious food problem. For this, they must depend entirely on the people, collect free donations in every form from the people, and maintain themselves. In future, as the repression becomes less and the scope for going back to the villages and settling and working there increases, then the cadre have to go back to the villages and live among the people as part of them, earn their livelihood and work with them.

Meanwhile, we must safeguard our secret centres existing in the forests as well as in the villages. We must continue to use them, for the shelter of our cadre and leaders, as well as the office centres to carry on our work. For this purpose, all the necessary efforts and precautions must be continued as before.

We must not recruit persons into the squads as before, but keep the developing conscious cadre in the village organisation and develop their work and political level.

The decision to withdraw the Telangana armed struggle was released to the public and the press and was broadcast by the radio on October 21, 1951.

Development of Events after the Withdrawal

Comrade P. Sundarayya went to Amarabad forest region again and attended the conference of the Party and guerrilla fighters held there in the third week of November and explained the decision of withdrawal and the future programme. The conference passed a resolution on martyrs and greeted the Soviet Union. After that, the conference passed resolutions approving the decision of withdrawal of struggle; on how to protect cadre; on the land question; on grain levies, on food, on agricultural labour problems; on the peace movement; on the forthcoming elections; on the organisation of People's Democratic Front and the Party.

Rajeshwar Rao and Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao went to Warangal-Khammam forest areas and explained the decision.

The underground Party leadership announced a reconstituted committee for Telangana of about 25 members consisting of both the underground cadre as well as those who were released and those who were in jail, and a small committee as the executive, of those who were available outside and of the leading cadre from the Provincial Committee available in Hyderabad city for taking day-to-day decisions regarding elections, and for taking all other necessary steps for safeguarding the cadre and the movement after the withdrawal. The legal comrades refused to cooperate.

Ajay Kumar Ghosh, then, without consulting the underground state leadership, constituted an 'Election Committee' but authorised it to function as the de facto State Committee. The underground Committee sent a circular to ignore this committee except for election purposes, and continued to guide the underground cadre while the 'Election Committee' was able to get the acceptance and cooperation from the open cadre. The underground cadre worked hard for the success of PDF candidates, as the Communist Party could not set up candidates in its own name as the ban on it had not yet been withdrawn.

The landlords had not yet returned to the villages, and could not establish their authority. The people were free to vote. They voted PDF candidates in thumping majorities and the Congress lost many deposits. In the Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts, the PDF won all the seats except four, and in the whole of Telangana, 40 PDF and 10 Socialist and Scheduled Castes Federation candidates supported by the PDF of a total of 100 candidates, won. Well-known Congress leaders were defeated. Seven out of 14 Lok Sabha seats were also won by PDF candidates.

These successes in the elections in Telangana and a similar electoral success (though less spectacular) in the Andhra area proved the utter baselessness of the campaign that was carried on by the other section that the Party had ruined the whole mass movement and was isolated from the people because of its sectarianism, and the anarchist and individual terroristic movement. In fact, out of 29 members of the Communist Parliamentary Group, 19 were from Andhra Pradesh. These victories made the Andhra leadership once again take its due place in the all-India leadership.

About 25 leading and important comrades of Telangana from the fighting areas as well as those who were open, held a prolonged meeting for a week in February 1952. They discussed all the problems that were dividing the cadre; Ajay Kumar Ghosh as the General Secretary of the Party attended it and guided it. He summed up the agreed conclusions, and a united Telangana Committee was formed to lead the Telangana movement. Comrade P. Sundarayya was the Secretary. Comrade M. Basavapunnaiah, Ravi Narayan Reddy, Baddam Yellareddi, Maqdoom, Devulapalli Venkateswar Rao, Bhimireddi Narasimha Reddy (?) were the other members of the Secretariat. If on any issue, differences persisted,

decisions were to be taken by two-thirds majority. Our anxiety for unity was so great that even this principle was accepted.

During 1952, after the elections were held, most of the leading cadre came out open, yet the hunt against underground squads and cadre continued. There were cases where the police hunted our cadre and killed a few. Arrests and prosecutions continued. Heavy sentences were being given. The Government when asked to fulfil its promise of withdrawing cases and warrants, releasing the arrested and convicted comrades, used to put up the argument that the guerrillas had not surrendered arms. And as long as the arms were not surrendered, they could not relax their hunt. Then the Telangana Committee met and decided unanimously to surrender the arms, as they did not serve any purpose then, and was only giving an excuse to the Government to pursue its vendetta. And in future, if once again, the people had to take up arms, it would be quite easy to gather them as in the past without relying on these out-moded fire-arms. The Party handed over the arms at specified places.

To this decision of surrendering arms, Devulapalli Venkateswar Rao was also a willing party. But in 1969, when he became a full-fledged Naxalite leader, he condemned the withdrawal of the struggle and surrender of arms as the greatest betrayal. According to him, even if the Telangana struggle was withdrawn, only if the arms were not surrendered, the course of events would have been different. Queer logic!!

Let me here itself make it absolutely clear that the Chinese Party at no time, during all the years from 1951 to 1967 ever said that the withdrawal of the Telangana movement was wrong, though they could have conveyed it on innumerable occasions when we had the opportunity to meet them personally. Once when we said in a mood of self-criticism that if we had had the correct understanding we could have retreated with much less losses and with greater gains, they told us not to stress that aspect but bring forth the revolutionary significance of the fact that the Nehru Government could not suppress a peasant partisan struggle even in a small part of the country.

The Differences Persisted

1. Though Ajay Kumar Ghosh concluded that the continuation of the armed struggle to defend the possession of the lands of the peasantry after the Indian army intervention was correct, and not having continued it would have been considered as betrayal by the peasantry, Ravi Narayan Reddy's group refused to accept this position and carried on their own propaganda that it was wrong to have continued the armed struggle.
2. They were opposed to the formation of the Vishalandhra Committee, as a leading committee of both the Andhra and Telangana areas, with each region having a separate regional committee subordinate to it. They insisted that both these should be directly led by the Central Committee, the Vishalandhra Committee could be only a forum to exchange opinions on common issues.

3. They were opposed to developing the Andhra Mahasabha as the united front of all democratic forces in Telangana, and wanted the PDF to be such an organisation for the whole of Hyderabad State. In fact, they wanted to develop the PDF as the Party, while relegating the building of the Communist Party to the background. Every mass activity was to be undertaken on behalf of the PDF.
4. They were opposed to forming Party committees at various levels, with the underground cadre occupying their due place. They dubbed these underground cadres as 'sectarians' and armed struggle-*wallahs* and so were to be eliminated, but on the ostensible plea that meetings of underground and open cadres were difficult to organise. They did not help the rehabilitation of the underground cadre or of their functioning.
5. They did neither grasp the disruptive character of the Mulki movement, nor fight vigorously against it. The Mulki movement was roused by the reactionaries in Telangana in 1952. The landlords, reactionary Government officials, Marwari businessmen, who, in the name of fighting the domination of outsiders, of persons coming from the Andhra region, were out to disrupt the democratic movement.
6. They started to seek compromises with landlords to settle disputes, many against the interests of the peasants instead of boldly leading militant resistance to the efforts of the landlords to evict the peasants from the lands they were in possession of and were cultivating.

'.....The most important difference is on the question of how to fight back the efforts of the Congress Government and the landlords to evict the peasants from the lands they are cultivating. It is on this issue that the sharpest differences have arisen in all places, and they become a daily feature, between Ravi Narayan Reddy's group and the legal cadre on the one side and the underground cadre on the other. Whatever they may say before the Central Committee, in practice, their actions are in favour of the landlords. Their attitude is not one of mobilising the people and safeguarding the possession of lands; but somehow or other arrive at compromises with the landlords—this is our firm opinion. The opinion of the Central Committee is also the same. Though there are certain sectarian attitudes among the underground cadre, the main deviation on the land question is one of right reformism— this is the agreed Central Committee opinion. In the daily functioning, on the most important issues of the peasantry, when there are serious differences (it is surprising that Rajeshwar Rao does not realise it), without discussing these differences in the Party Committees, Ravi Narayan Reddy's and Ella Reddy's group carried on totally wrong propaganda that the underground cadre were carrying on their adventuristic activities'. (P. Sundarayya's letter in 1953, 'On Our Differences')

Ultimately, seeing that the Andhra Committee leadership, with Rajeshwar Rao as the Secretary, was not prepared to fight these disruptive policies, and also seeing that the Central Committee, though politically upholding the viewpoint of

the fighting underground cadre, was not prepared to enforce or even give their decisions in writing, and seeing that the Telangana and Andhra Committees started functioning separately, Comrades P.Sundarayya and M. Basavapunnaiah went back to the Andhra area. It was only again, after 1956, when Andhra Pradesh was formed that a united Party Committee came into existence.

Epilogue

It is now 30 years since the Communists became a political force in the Andhra Mahasabha of Telangana and took the leadership of the anti-landlord and anti-Nizam struggle. It is now more than 25 years since the mass of the peasantry took up arms to safeguard the lands they were cultivating and resist the armed attacks of the landlords and the armed forces of the Nizam and subsequently of the Indian Government after its intervention. It is now over 20 years since that heroic partisan struggle was withdrawn on October 21, 1951. When we are writing the history of 'Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons' now after the lapse of such a long period of two decades, it is at least necessary to take note of what is the position of the people's movement in that area now in 1972; what is the position of the Communist Party and where are the principal participants and leaders of the movement now? Were the tactics adopted after withdrawal of the struggle all that they should have been, or could there have been other alternative measures? What else could we have done at least to be in a far better position than what we are in now, or is it all inevitable? What are the main lessons to be drawn for our future action for the development of the revolutionary movement in our country?

These are some of the questions that come up before us. Let me sum up my impressions;

Even now, after continuous and murderous attacks for over 20 years by the landlords who returned with the help of the guns and bayonets of the Congress Government, and who carry on these attacks with the help of that very same Congress Government of theirs, the Telangana peasant movement is still quite vigorous in about 300 villages where our Party, the CPI (M), holds a dominant and leading position as against 3,000 villages at the height of the Telangana movement. It is still a powerful force in five talukas of Nalgonda district, and in another five talukas of Warangal and Khammam districts. Our movement could not strike deep roots in all the extended areas in these and in other districts and was suppressed. The Right Communists, too, hold sizable influence in the talukas of Devarakonda, Narsapur, Adilabad, Sircilla and Warangal, each in a separate district.

In these areas, as well as in the whole of Telangana, to whatever extent the masses still enjoy the fruits of that great struggle, it is the result of their heroic and persistent resistance to the brutal repression of the landlords and the Congress regime and not due to the benign rule of the Congress.

The most shattering blow to the movement in its old areas is in Manukota taluka. Here we find the cruellest and most systematic attacks of the landlords, the old powerful *deshmukhs* who now wear the Congress mantle, on the peasant movement and the brutal manner they suppressed it. We are unable to counteract these terror tactics of the landlords. Quite a number of active cadres, after being repeatedly beaten and their possessions looted, were forced to make peace with the landlords, some even actively joining them to fight the Party and the people. Added to this the carrot-dangling by the landlords, offering certain positions in panchayats, certain concessions to certain sections of the people to split them away, also disrupted the movement to a certain extent.

Similar attempts to suppress and liquidate the people's movement and the Communist Party in other strongholds were made all through, and during the last 5 years they have been intensified in the Huzurnagar-Suryapet area, Khammam Madhira area and Narsampet-Mulugu area. Thousands, including the leaders of the Party and ordinary peasants, were implicated in one or another criminal case, organised goonda attacks were made on Party members and their houses with the active help of the police, through corrupt police officers specially posted to do this dirty job. Our Party units and the toiling masses are fighting these back facing heavy odds and are trying to defend the movement doggedly, making great sacrifices.

But it is also necessary to note the changing socio-economic structure in the areas of the old Telangana peasant movement, and the consequent changing correlation of forces in the countryside.

The landlords who ran away or were driven out of the villages during that movement, had trekked back and reconsolidated their positions in the rural areas. They seized back most of their so-called *seri* lands, and sold most of the *anyakrantalu* and lands under the old tenants to other rich cultivators and some protected tenants, who got the right of first purchase under the land laws enacted in 1950 and later under the impact of the Telangana peasant movement. The drive to deprive the peasants and agricultural labourers of the waste lands they have been cultivating is going on, and bitter struggles for *patta* right for this land goes on. The land ceiling acts are only on paper, no land in excess of the so-called ceilings is taken over or distributed.

But the landlords do not own or command thousands of acres, in their own names, nor lease it on the same old scale, nor adopt the old open methods of utter feudal exploitation and loot. They have redistributed the land among their own relatives, apart from what was sold, and have taken to 'self-cultivation' by modern agricultural methods by employing wage-labour, though feudal forms of

exploitation, rack-renting, usury and low wages, and some kinds of indirect forced labour also are important features of the present rural situation.

These landlords are buttressed by the growth of the new rich strata in the rural areas, the capitalist farmers, the capitalist landlords— who do not do manual labour in their fields but get them cultivated entirely by wage labour, at the most confining their tasks to one of supervision, and the rich peasants who, while contributing physical labour, depend more on wage labour and earn a regular surplus.

A considerable section of middle peasants has also grown. This growth of the new rich and middle peasantry is especially linked with the growth of irrigation under small river projects and under Nagarjunasagar canals and under wells with electric pumps.

The landlords have not only changed their pattern of land ownership and cultivation, but also their tactics of fighting the growing people's movements. They adopt the tactics of dividing the ranks of the people's movement, along with their methods of brutal terror and repression. They promise land and actually give it to certain sections of the rural poor based on castes and communities, the grazing lands, the communal lands, and waste lands. They incite certain sections against other sections who are already cultivating the land and are under the influence of kisan or agricultural labour organisations or of the Communist Party.

They actively support toddy or arrak (liquor) contractors as against ordinary toddy-tappers. They utilise the community projects, cooperative societies, loans for purchasing of tractors, electricity for wells, fertilisers, et cetera, to improve their hold over the middle and rich peasantry. They try to monopolise all the key administrative posts in various governmental departments. They resort to every foul method to dominate the village panchayats, panchayat *samities* and zilla *parishads* to garner all benefits through these local bodies.

Added to these, when these steps are not enough to dominate the villages, they resort to goondagiri, backed by the whole police and administrative set-up.

Because of these reasons, today even in those 300 villages where our movement and the Party hold a major position, a considerable section of the rural poor, a large percentage of the middle and rich peasantry are with the Congress. It is necessary to analyse concretely this new class correlation of forces in the villages and adopt concrete tactics to advance the movement, overcoming weaknesses and defeating the enemy plans.

In fact, the agrarian movement, now-a-days, is not in such a strong position to take up as a practical issue the question of land seizure or distribution of the lands of the landlords which would ensure land to the tiller. The movement is just forced to defend the possession of and the right to continue cultivation of waste lands; or just take up the same old minimum wages demand for agricultural labour, which we demanded and enforced over two decades ago.

In Other Sectors

In urban centres and among the working class, where even during the period of the Telangana struggle the revolutionary movement and especially our Party was weak, even now also it continues to be so. In the Hyderabad industrial belt, in the Bellampalli-Sirpur belt, and among the Government and middle class employees, teachers and shop employees, the organisation and the movement continue to be weak. They are mostly dominated by the Congress, and by various other political and sectional leaders. Left and democratic parties or the Communist Party are not a major force among them.

The greatest failure during this whole period is the failure to develop a strong democratic student movement, or even to develop the necessary deep contacts with the educated younger generations—the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia.

So much so, it is not the revolutionary forces that are able to draw in these younger generations and working class and middle class employees but the various reactionary forces. The result has been seen in the recent 'Separate Telangana State' movement led by the very same landlords and reactionary and big business interests, who have always been opposing the Telangana peasant movement, the democratic aspirations of the people, the formation of linguistic states and the unity of the nationalities on a democratic basis. The students and the Government and other middle class employees were carried away by false assumptions and assurances. The great democratic movement that once forced the creation of linguistic states had been so weakened that in that very area, the counter-slogan came to the fore, backed and led by the reactionaries. But once again, it is still in the strongholds of the Communist Party—Nalgonda and Khammam—that the people rallied to fight this separatist movement.

Why is all this? Is this inevitable or could the Party have done anything better? Or is it that in area after area advances take place in spurts and in isolation, and get crushed by the ruling classes, not to revive for a long time? Is there no possibility of the revolutionary democratic movement being coordinated and defended in the strong areas, till enough areas could join them and a mortal blow could be struck at the state power of the ruling classes and People's Democracy led by the working class ushered in?

Some Failures

I have referred to the sharp differences that arose in the post-withdrawal period among our Party leaders in Telangana on the question of defending the land that was still in the possession of the Telangana peasantry, and how that section which had been opposing the armed defence of the land after the Nehru Government's intervention, resorted mainly to seeking compromises with the landlords, instead of mobilising the peasantry to get the maximum concessions even in that difficult position.

We did not adopt a militant line of defending the land and keep the land question as the main focal issue before the agrarian masses, and before the whole democratic movement. It could have been done only if the whole Party, not only in Telangana but in the whole of India had been imbued with the correct perspective of the future development of the whole revolutionary movement in India, and had not adopted a constitutional parliamentary line of development, pinning great hopes on the Nehru Government's progressive policies.

Our Party should have understood the very uneven development of the revolutionary democratic movement in the country, and the necessity of adopting suitable tactics of concentration and developing the movement, all round and on all fronts, in key and important areas, first developing them as real political bases, which would set an example for other democratic forces to inspire and guide their course.

In other areas, we should have been able to build very close links with other democratic forces and parties and mass organisations, however vacillating and halting. Even, in many instances, they may be retrograde, still slowly, step by step, we could have helped them to come to correct lines and develop the movement.

Thirdly, our Party should have developed in such a way that whatever the repression or measures the ruling classes and their state might resort to, the Party could be in a position to continue its multifarious activities on all key fronts and in all key areas. In our constitutional illusions, we neglected this task.

The Communist Party Organisation

1. One of the most fateful decisions taken by our Party State Committee, encouraged and endorsed by the central leadership, was to admit back into the Party all those persons and especially important personages who showed cowardice, and even surrendered to the police, some even betraying secrets of the Party, underground cadre and apparatus. The reason given was that the policies pursued by the then all-India leaders being sectarian, adventurist, caused great damage and these persons could not face the enemy terror, and so were not guilty to the extent of being thrown out of the Party for good. The legal comrades who came out of jails before the underground comrades could come out into the open, in Andhra, took this decision by a one vote majority. This majority also held the view that the Telangana armed resistance after the Indian army intervention was wrong, and so even those who showed weakness and outright cowardice and betrayal should be taken back into the Party.

   Apart from these who sneaked back thus into the Party, there are some who were in the thick of the Telangana struggle, but after its withdrawal, joined the Congress and became its rabid anti-Communist agents.

2. There is another category of comrades who opposed the continuation of the armed struggle after Nehru's intervention, almost all of whom were in jail during 1949–1951. But they had taken an active part, after their release, in the campaign against the Telangana movement, and were in fact the leaders of the Rightist faction. All of them without exception joined the Right Communist Party.
3. But there are also some others, who were in the forefront during the whole of the Telangana armed struggle, fighting, but later during the period of legality came to the decision that it was enough for them, and it would be better to be with the Right Communists, with their theories of National Democracy, of joint front with the Congress and peaceful transition.
4. There are still other leading comrades who have been all along taking a revolutionary standpoint and stuck to the correct Party stand, but who feeling frustrated over the prolonged nature of the development of the revolutionary movement, and coming recently under the Chinese Party's sectarian advocacy of immediate armed struggle irrespective of objective conditions, turned ultra-leftists, and became leaders of various Naxalite groups.
5. There are also quite a number of comrades who have been through the thick of the whole fight, but gradually left the political front, and sought non-political livelihoods, earning decent incomes for their families. As the number of children increases and the pressure for a secure life comes, there is a tendency to pass from a professional revolutionary to a part-timer and later to be fully immersed in their livelihood and just become sympathisers.

Lack of revolutionary vigilance in admitting members into the Party persists. Sometimes, we admit persons into the Party who show certain initiative and capacities without seriously taking into consideration their past.

Ideological Weakness of Our Cadre and Failure to keep Contact with and Develop the Militans and Party Members

1. All this shows that even in the leading cadre, ideological development, application of theory to concrete realities, is very much lacking. This makes them unable to endure the life-long, patient revolutionary work and find their moorings under all situations, and under the complex national and international situations that develop.

   Our failure to ideologically and politically develop even our own leading cadre is one of the reasons for the ups and downs in the Communist movement in our country.
2. In Telangana, as we look back over the past two decades, we have to reproach ourselves with not having been able to keep in touch with tens of thousands of militants who suffered so much throughout the Telangana struggle, innumerable physical tortures and indignities, long years of jail life, etc. We failed to nurse their anger against the Congress rule and develop them as

active fighters against the regime and its policies. They have not been drawn into mass organisations at the village level and into actively participating in their activities. At the most, we might have been able to draw in a small, a very small section into such organisations and activity.

3. It is true that for accomplishing this, we needed a systematic party organisation and structure from the village upwards, each village branch or branch for a group of villages actively functioning. Then a Local Committee capable of guiding a few tens of such branches and the District Committee that could guide these Local Committees. We did not develop such a organizational structure for the Party. We functioned more through general-body meetings, public meetings, parliamentary and panchayat forums, but not on the basis of a real revolutionary party structure.
4. We have ignored the education and ideological development of even Party members and cadre, leave alone the militants.

   If, in spite of this failure, a certain number of leading cadre and Party members developed and today continue to lead the movement, it is mainly due to their individual grit, capacity and experience derived from long periods of trial and error, and being in the thick of the movement. No conscious, organised efforts to educate them ideologically, train them in all the practical tasks of the mass movement were sufficiently made or carried out in practice.
5. That is why when any such leading cadre in any area becomes inactive, or wobbles, or leaves the Party under various pressures, that whole area, along with a large number of Party members, goes with him. The movement and the Party suffer a terrific loss and even a complete black-out in that area.

Our Tasks Now

Now that the old generation (18 to 35 years old) in 1942 that participated in the Telangana struggle has become old or is passing away, two generations of new cadre should have developed to replace them. We find even at lower levels that this is not sufficiently happening. Unless we draw them into our Party and develop them, and promote them to higher leaderships quickly, the movement cannot develop much.

We are now facing acute problems of organisation, ideological development, defence of advanced movements and of developing movements in other areas and states. We hope these experiences of Telangana will be helpful in facing some of the tasks, if we really draw the proper lessons from them and try to apply them to the concrete situation in these states.

PART III

Appendix I

Martyrs of the Struggle

* See biographical sketch in Part II, Chapter 10
** See biographical sketch in Part I, Chapter 3

Nalgonda District

Suryapet Taluka

	Name	Village	Remarks
*1.	John	Jajireddy Gudem	Zonal Commander
*2.	Linga Reddy	- Do -	Squad member
3.	Another	- Do -	- Do -
4.	Ganji Satyanarayana	Malkapuram	Central Organizer Squad Assistant
5.	Harijan Muthayya		Testicles cut off, eyes gouged out, cut to pieces, imme diately a few weeks after 'police action'
6.	Bandala Venkata Reddy	Malkapuram	
7.	Kondala Reddy	Istalapuram	Squad Commander
8.	Ravula Veerayya	Epuru	Deputy Commander killed on 27.12.1948
9,10,11.	Hussain, Ramulu and one other	Gorantla	Killed on 26.12.1948
12,13.	Two others of the same squad		Killed in Narsimha-puram, 8.1.1949
14.	Chakali Mangayya	Burakacharla	Killed on 8.1.1949
15.	Kummari Latchayya	Chandupatla	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
16.	Chinta Somi Reddy	Penubadu	Guerella Squad Commander
17.	Bhikshamayya	Tirumalagiri	Local Squad Leader
18.	Bakkaya	- Do -	- Do -
19.	Nagireddi Chandra Reddy	Imampeta	Joined the squad as student at the age of 16 and was shot dead at the age of 17 by the Indian army along with Bandala Chandra Reddy
20.	S. Venkatappayya	Madhavaram	
21.	Lakshmi Narasu	Nayakapalli	Killed on 20.11.1949
*22.	Ponugoti Seetarama Rao		
23.	Sangam, Seetaramarao's companion		
*24.	Anireddi Ramireddi	Ramannagudem	
*25.	Pasanur Venkata Reddy	Kasanagodu	
26.	Vallabha Venkanna		Caught by his legs and head, dashed on rocks and killed for giving shelter to Dayam Rajireddy, Squad Commander then, now in the Congress and enemy of the people.
27.	Bayya Veerayya	Masinapalli	Centre Organiser of Kakaravayi, Kotha. gudem, Tanamcherla, etc. Shot dead in Bopparam Camp Killed in Manthena
28.	Bhadrayya (Jagannatham)		
29.	Harijan peasant	Toorpugudem	Killed on 1.7.1949

	Name	Village	Remarks
30,31,32.	Names not known		Shot dead on 31.8.1949
*33.	Rifle Ramulu		Killed on 1.10.1949
34-37.	Gondrela Gowdayya and three other squad members		Killed on 16.2.1950 between Keshavapuram and Mota
38.	Y. Venkatarama Reddy		Killed in Gapavaram Hillocks, 22.2.1950
39.	J. Veerayya		– Do –
40.	Talavari Narsayya		– Do –
41.	Goka China Muthayya		Killed near Tirumalagiri
42.	and his assistant		Forests, 15.7.1950
43.	One comrade	Suryapet town	Killed on 30.10.1950
44.	A Muslim militant	Suryapet town	
45,46.	Two comrades	Pengadapa	
47.	Pooram Mallayya	Elugupalli	Killed in Yellapuram forests, 18.12.1950
*48.	Lingayya	Chandupatla	Ordinary Squad member, developed into Zonal Commander, surrounded in Yellandu and shot dead
49.	Gundu Narsi Reddy	Nemali	Timmapuram Centre Organiser
50.	V. Narasimha Reddy		Died in Jalna jail in lathi-charge against protest action
51.	And another comrade		– Do –
52.	One comrade	Vempati	Killed on 31.1.1951
53.	Tatori Yempalli		Village leader, rolled in red-hot sands until skin peeled off, Died in Kothagudem Camp
*54.	Vatsya and Bimla		
*55.	Ramulu of Miryala		

	Name	Village	Remarks
*56.	Bheemireddy Kondal Reddy	Kothagudem	
	During Razakar Days		
1.	Narsayya	Patasuryapet	Killed during Nizam Razakar armed raid on Patasuryapet in 1946.
2.	Bhikshmayya	Patarlapadu	- Do -
3.	Ananta Reddy	Balemula	Killed in Balemula raid in 1946
4	Matta Reddy		
**5-9.	Gopala Reddy and four others	Atmakur	Squad Commander and Squad members
10.	Sabbu Linga Reddy	Pamulapadu	Killed during raid on Ravulapenta Camp
11.	Nukala Raji Reddy	Sirikonda	Killed by Razakars after torture
12.	Nukala Papi Reddy	- Do -	- Do -
13.	One peasant	Arvapalli	Killed for driving nails on the road
14.	Mallipaka Mysayya	Karivirala	
15.	EldganJala Lakshmi Narasayya	Tungaturti	Killed during flag-hoisting ceremony at Aleru
16-20.	Golla Komarayya and four militants	Kotapdu	Squad member, shot dead as repirsal after successful raid on police camp
21.	Yadagiri	Chilapakunta	Killed during raid on military lorry at Tirumalagiri
	-7 persons	in Ogodu	After Razakars' defeat in the Solipeta Palmgrove battle
	-6 persons -	in Kaparthi	
	-5 persons	in Vellala	
	-18 persons	in Kasarlapadu	
	-18 persons	in Ramannagudem	
	-32 persons	in Patarlapadu	

	Name	Village	Remarks
	-12 persons	in Bollanapalli	
	-12 persons	in Chandupatla	
	-1 militant in the raid on Atmakur Razakar camp		
	-4 in the attack on Errapadu *gadi*		
	Huzurnagar Taluka		
*1	Vallabhaneni Seetaramayya	Penchikaladinne	Zonal Organiser, killed in action in Devarkonda taluka
2, 3, 4.	Along with three others		
5.	Balija (Bodla) Ramulu	Penchikaladinne	Organiser of Chintagunta. Both were decoyed by Subbareddigudem landlords and killed in March 1950
6.	Chakali Somulu	Chintagunta	
7.	Kummari Lalayya	Malkapuram	Squad members and supporters
8.	Lambadi Bhashu	- Do -	- Do -
9.	Harijan Gopayya	- Do -	- Do -
10.	Harijan Ramayya	- Do -	- Do -
11.	Erragani Venkulu	- Do -	Village Organiser
12.	Venkata Reddy		Party wholetimer
13.	Chelasani Somayya (Velama)	- Do -	Shot dead at Keetavarigudem
14.	Mutthineni Ramachandrayya	Keetavarigudem	Village leader
*15.	Nakrikanti Venkulu	- Do -	Central Organiser, shot dead in 1950 at Yatavakilla Betavolu
*16.	Vakkantu Suryanarayana	Velidanda	Student, became Party organiser, shot dead at Keetavarigudem
17.	Marapu Kotayya	Budada	Local militant

	Name	Village	Remarks
18.	Harijan Kotayya	- Do -	Local militant
19.	Vadla Veerayya	Narayanapuram	Local militant
20.	Bura Ramulu	- Do -	- Do -
21.	Pandiri Venkulu	Kalamalacheruvu	
22.	Harijan Muthayya	- Do -	
23.	Appireddy	- Do -	Burnt alive in hayrick
24.	Mangali Somulu	- Do -	Beaten to death
25.	Balayya	- Do -	- Do -
*26.	Muttavarapu Venkayya	Kapugallu	Centre organiser, killed in January, 1950
27-29.	Three local militants	Kapugallu	Farm servants of a landlord
30.	Chandrayya	Alangapuram	Local militant
31.	Kolla Venkayya	- Do -	Party wholetimer
32.	Pendem Ramulu	Garidepalli	
33.	Another militant	Garidepalli	Shot dead for refusing to join the home-guards
*34.	Bareddi Saidulu (Reddy)	Mellacheruvu	Squad leader, killed in July 1949
	(9 youths who were sympathetic to the struggle during the Razakar days were shot dead as reprisal for guerrillas' action against the home-guards, Mellacheruvu)		
35.	Venkateswarlu	Mellacheruvu	Squad member
*36.	Nasarayya		Squad member, killed after successful raid on Penu-ganchiprolu police station in Nandigama taluka, while taking shelter in a field.
37.	Chakali Kotayya	Gorlagudem	Local militant, killed on 1.12.1950.
38.	Ramaswamy	Gorlagudem	Local militant, killed on 1.12.1950.
39.	Vadla Veerayya	Lakkaram	Local youth militants shot dead as reprisal against guerrillas killing a landlord of Lakkaram Lingagiri Pargana
40.	Brahmayya	- Do -	
41.	Guravayya	- Do -	

	Name	Village	Remarks
42.	Pentayya (Koppolu Penta Reddy)	Ammaravaram Lingagiri enclave	Killed during raid on Ellampeta police Station
43.	Gowda Nagulu	Chilukuru Burugadda	Party wholetimer
44–45.	Two persons		Forced to do night-watch, killed when police in mufti fired on the home-gaurds.
46.	Local Militant	Togarrayi	Killed after being pointed out by Village Patel
47.	Bukhya Balya	Janapadu Tanda	Killed on 8.11.1950
48.	A washerman	Janapadu Tanda	Killed on suspicion of helping guerrillas
49.	Golla Narasimhulu	Chintapalem	Active agitator in labour struggles
50.	Cheedella Durgayya	Chintapalem	
51.	Pagidimanu Tirupatayya	Chintapalem	
52.	Erraboyina Lingayya	Bejjikallu	Cultivating his recovered land, shot dead in April 1950 for refusing to surrender the land
53.	Bolla Vankayya	Koppolu	Shot dead as he refused to give up the land to the landlord
54.	Bolla Veerayya	Koppolu	Party organiser, tied to lorry and dragged to death
55.	Agricultural labour militant	Regulagadda	Shot dead in reprisal for destruction of landlord's house
56.	Anandam	Venkatramapuram	Courier between Huzurnagar and Miryalagudem
*57.	Gajjala Rama Narsi Reddy	Venkatramapuram	Organiser of Mattampalli, killed in April 1950
58.	Seelam Ramulu	Dondapadu	Caught in Indian Union territory and shot dead along with some other inactive old squad members of Razakar days

	Name	Village	Remarks
*59.	Kunti Gorla Lingayya	Ragipadu	60-year-old courier
* b)	Russia Lingulu	Ragipadu	
*60.	Ramu (Gangireddi Koti Reddy)	Tirumalagiri Miryalagudem	Courier
61.	Tota Latchayya	Gondrela	
62.	Hairjan Chandrayya	Gondrela	All these three along with
63.	Mera Janayya	Chandupatla	V. Suryanarayana were shot
64.	Harijan Somayya	Chandupatla	dead at Keetavarigudem
65.	Bachhalakuri Muttayya	Raghavapuram	
66.	Venkateswarlu	- Do -	
67.	Ganda Satyam	- Do -	
68.	Kosa Narsayya	Yatavakilla	Squad member
69.	Narayana	Muttavaram	Killed at Janapadu 8.12.1950
70-73.	Potu Satyanarayana and 3 others		Killed at Rayanaguda, 9.12.1950
74.	Chitla Narasayya	Kodada	Killed on 15.12.1950
75.	Munagal Saidulu	Kodada	Killed on 21.1.1951
76.	Somi Lachhayya	Gudipalli	Killed on 28.1.1951
77-79	Three persons	Sreenivasapuram	Killed on 17.1.1951
80.	Wife of a lambadi peasant	Veeraram	Pregnant, but brutally killed for refusing to leave the land they were cultivating
81.	Mangayya		Squad leader, broke through the police cordon at Kaluvapalli but later died of wounds
*82-83.	Vediri Raji Reddy and Rangachari	Huzurnagar taluka Kamareddi	Taken out from jail and shot dead by the military in Warangal
84-86.	Daram Venkayya and two others	Krishnapuram	Killed on 9.12.1951

	Name	Village	Remarks
	During Razakar Days		
1.	Errabalu Appi Reddy	Mallareddigudem	
2-4	Three others including a woman	Mallareddigudem	who was handing over stones to her husband for his sling, died of bullet wounds,
5.	Venkata Reddy		Squad leaders killed in the raid on Ravulapenta Camp
6.	Devabattina Venkateswar Rao		Killed at Chintalammagudem
7-9.	Golla Lingayya, Gopayya, Sankar Reddy (Santi Reddy)		
10.	Erra Satyam	Cheemirala	Died of snake-bite
11-19.	9 youths	Mellacheruvu	Killed by Razakars
	Munagala Pargana (Enclave)		
1.	Vengala Papayya	Nelamarri	
*2	Sunkari Venkatappayya	Ramasamudram	
3.	Ginjaluri Narsayya	Jagannadhapuram	
*4.	Ginjaluri Pitchayya	- Do -	
*5.	Kollu Nandayya	- Do -	
6.	Kollu Bhadrayya	Jagannadhapuram	
7.	KolluMuttayya	- Do -	
*8.	Golla Muttayya	- Do -	
9.	Kagitala Butchayya	- Do -	
10.	Somireddi Jaggayya	Narasimhulugudem	
11.	Vempati Veeramallu	Tummalapalli	
12.	Tumu Ramayya	Sarvaram	
13.	Gaddam Mutyalu	Nallabandagudem	
*14.	Vaddera (Gundu) Ramulu		Killed in Mahboobnagar district
15.	Uppala Ramayya		Died in Cuddalore Jail
16.	Gaddala Narsayya		- Do -
17.	Mudigonda Veerayya	Kalakova	

	Name	Village	Remarks
18.	Gattu Gopalakrishnayya	Karivirala	
19.	Pusapati Ramulu	Karivirala	
20.	Chandra Reddy	Imampeta	
21.	Golla Amarayya	Jerripotulagudem	
22–24.	Three persons		Killed in police firing when they went to Betavolu for flag-hoisting
*25.	Gurram Narsi Reddy	Timmapuram	
*26.	S. Punnayya	Anjalipuram	
27.	Ramanatham	Kokkireni	
28.	Jagannathachari		Taken from jail and shot dead
29–43.	15 others whose names are not available		
	Miryalagudem Taluka		
*1,	Alwala Narasimha Reddy	Alwala	Zonal Commander, died in Teppalamadugu; in action, January 1949
2.	Beesam Matta palli	Venkatadripalem	Squad member, killed in 1949
3.	Neti Reddy Lakshminarasimha Reddy	Tadakamalla	Shot dead by armed Congress squad between Machavaram and N elamarri, 1948
4.	And another member	Tadakamalla	- Do -
*5,	Gunda Venkanna	Tadakamalla	Topucherla Centre Organiser, shot dead in 1950
6.	Somulu	Kandivarigudem	Agricultural labourers, squad members, shot dead in 1950
7.	Pullayya		
*8.	Ranga Reddy	Kamareddigudem	Centre organiser, against

	Name	Village	Remarks
			Baba Sahebpet Deshmukhs, killed in 1950
*9.	Appi Reddy	Ramadugu	Centre Organiser, shot dead in Borrayapalem military camp in 1950
*10.	Akarapu Saidulu	Bottalapalem	Centre leader of agricultural labour strikes, shot dead in 1950
*11.	Akkala Saidayya	Bottalapalem	Courier, killed in August 1950
12.	Janu Muslim	Ragadapa	Militant poor peasant hose whole family was strong supporters of struggle, shot dead, March 1950
13.	Venkatayya	Nandikonda	Village agricultural labour strike leader, shot dead at Nellikallu, April 1950
14.	Veera Reddy	Nammapuram	Supporter, shot dead in November 1950
15.	And another supporter		– Do –
16.	A militant	Kottapalli	Agricultural labour strike leader, shot dead in December 1950
17.	Saidulu	Kukkadam	Squadmember during Razakar days, shot dead in 1950 while living in village
18–19.	Kummari Mattayya	Mukundapuram	Shot dead because he refused to give up his land. His wife was raped
20–21.	Two supporters	Mukundapuram	
22–23.	Muttayya and another	Yellapuram	Killed for hiding guerrillas' grain
24.	A father		Brutally beaten to death because he refused togive out the whereabouts of his son a factory worker

	Name	Village	Remarks
25.	Magati Sattayya	Buzuruguda	Killed, December 1950
26.	Patakoti Saidulu	Kondrapalli	
27.	Dasari Butchayya	Keshavapuram	Killed on December 15, 1950
28.	Dora Maisayya	- Do -	- Do -
29–33.	One woman and four men	Silerumiyagudem	
34.	One person	Malakacharla	
35.	Kosala Kattayya		Killed on 24.1.1951 between Rajanna-gudem and Vengannagudem
36.	Mangali	Panakalu	
37.	Boddu Guravayya	Yerraballi	Killed on 26.1.1951
38.	And his companion		- Do -
39.	Raghavayya	Adividevulapalli	
40.	One comrade		Squad member of Adireddidalam, killed on 12.10.1949
41.	Amritam		Centre Organiser, Vadapalli centre
42.	Lachhulu		- Do -
43–50.	8 persons	Vaddipatla	Shot dead in Devarakonda taluka
51–53	Three persons Rayanapadu		Killed in Devarakonda taluka
	Nalgonda and Ramannapeta Talukas		
*1.	Golla Lingayya	Appajipeta	Squad leader killed in Chintalamma-gudem action by Razakars along with Gopayya and Somi Reddy in Huzur-nagar taluka
2.	Seshu Reddy	Nalgonda taluka,	Killed on 20.7.1949
3.	Lok Seshadri	- Do -	- Do -
4.	Gurapa Rangayya		- Do -
5.	Gurapa Lingayya (15 years old)	- Do -	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
6.	A boy	Vallala	Member of the Bala Sangham, tortured and shot in Nakrekallu Camp. 'You may kill any number of Communists, but the Party cannot be sup pressed'
*7.	Gutta Sitaram Reddy	Urumadla	Zonal Organiser, caught and shot dead along with Pitchanna in the Rachakonda hillocks
8.	Erramala Venkayya	Chinakaparti	
9.	Ellaswamy	Nomula	Courier, betrayed while trying to establish contact with Manukota area, tortured and shot dead
10.	Narasimham (Mukundam alias Ramavaram Muthayya)	Choulla	Squad Commander, betrayed in Hyderabad City, shot dead
11–14.	4 persons	Gollagutta	
15–30.	Marreddy Ramchandra Reddy and 15 others	Nalgonda taluka	
31.	One person	Nemilikallu	Killed on 22.1.1951
*32.	Erra Narsi Reddy		
	During Razakar Days		
1–4.	Four persons	Paridala	Killed during Razakar-Nizam police raid
**5.	Pasanuru Venkata Reddy	Annaram	Killed in Nizam's cavalry raids
6.	Musuku Venkata Reddy		
	Bhuvanagiri Taluka (including the present Ramannapeta and old Shirky talukas)		
*1.	Pasam Rami Reddi	Kurraram	Zonal Commander and organiser

	Name	Village	Remarks
*2.	Peddanna (Kodanda Rami Reddi)	Brahmanapalli	Area Leader killed by military on 6.6.1949
3.	Kongara Atchayya	Brahmanapalli	Killed in July 1949
*4.	Padma Reddy	Shunsala	Central Organiser, landlords Pannala brothers got him shot dead in the Nandanam military camp in June 1949
*5.	P. Ramachandra Reddy (Pitchanna)	Shunsala	Zonal Organiser. Caught in April 1951 in Rachakonda hills and shot dead after a month's torture
6.	Jerri Eegala Rami Reddy	Kolanupaka	Student, guerrilla squad member, died in action in Musi, July 1949
7.	Madhavalu	Kolanupaka	Worker in city caught and shot dead while visiting village
*8.	Suryanarayana	Kottapalli	Squad leader captured in River Musi action and shot dead, August 1949
*9.	Gali Hanumayya (Ramesh)	Kottapalli Suryapet taluka	Zonal Commander, died in River Musi action, July 1949
*10.	V. Uttarayya (Narasimham)	Bollepalli	Killed after 'police action'
11.	Narasimham's aunt	Bollepalli	Raped to death
12.	Bungapatla Yadagiri	Maddulagudem hamlet Bollepalli	Squad member, tortured brutally by Indian military immediately after 'police action' and shot dead
13.	Pinnakanti Yadagiri	Bollepalli	Killed in Sept. 1949

(Lakshma Reddy, Hanumanu Reddy, Ravi Raghava Reddy and his minor son and 8 farm servants, all of Bollepalli, were killed during Razakar days)

	Name	Village	Remarks
14.	Yadagiri	Chandepalli	Squad members, killed in the
15.	Antayya	- Do -	Vikarabad area
16.	Singaram Mallayya	Chandepalli	Centre Organiser
	(Both from agricultural labour families, betrayed and surrounded at Bheemanapalli and shot dead on April 25, 1951)		
17.	Golla Narasimhulu	Chandepalli	Militant, caught by landlords and police and burnt alive
18.	Rangayya	Chandepalli	Centre Organiser, tied to a cart, petrol was poured over him and he was burnt alive, died shouting 'Communist Party Zinda-bad'.
	(Gone Venkatayya)	Kotamarti	Died of cholera in Chandepalli)
19.	Golla Pentayya	Indirala	Supporter, caught along with Uttarayya of Bollepalli and shot dead after days of torture
20.	Chintala Krishna Reddy	Yenkirala	Shot dead by Indian police for refusing to divulge the whereabouts of his brother, Party organiser Yadagiri
21.	Muthayya	- Do -	After release from jail, while staying in Tippayagudem, shot dead by Indian police
22.	Muthayya	Pilapalapadu or Allapuram	Courier, tortured and shot dead, did not reveal any secrets
23.	Agayya	Allapuram	
24.	Gopayya (Nagayya)	Allapuram	
25.	Vangara Posayya	Gotukonda or Muthapuram	Squad member
26.	Durga Chandrayya	Dasireddigudem	Kukkanur landlords got him shot

	Name	Village	Remarks
27.	Kavali Sattayya	Kukkanur	Kukkanur landlords got him shot.
*28.	Venkata Ramanujachan	Chitakodur, Ramannapeta taluka	Centre Organiser, shot and burnt alive a few days after 'police action'.
29.	Kammari Narasimham	Dadupalli	
30.	Enugu Adi Reddy	Atmakur	Squad member, shot dead in the Atmakur military camp at the instigation of Siddapuram landlords
*31.	Chada Komarayya	Puligilla	Centre Organiser, arrested in Kunur, shot dead in the Motakodur military camp after 'police action'
32.	Vakiti Pullayya	Puligilla	Village elder, refused to betray Village leader Mallayya, hence beaten to death
33.	Mallayya	Puligilla	Village leader, caught, limbs broken and beaten to death in custody
34.	Venkata Narasaiah	Shad (Kokkireni)	Organising textile workers in the city. Earlier occupied lands seized by Annaram landlords, caught and shot by the Indian army along with
35.	Gurunathapalli Muttayya	Shad	Squad member
36.	Lingayya (alias Subba Rao)	Brahmanapalli or Jilakapalli	Worked in City Tech. Arrested in hillocks, Tortured and shot dead
37.	Anna Reddi Manna Reddy	Ramagundam	Killed, August 8, 1950
38.	Ramulu	W. Bhuvanagiri	Squad member, 8.10.1950
39.	Tolam Musalayya	W. Bhuvanagiri	Squad member, 8.10.1950
40.	Rajaram	Masaipet	Squad member
41–43.	Three persons		Killed in reprisal after guerrillas killed Mysa Gowda of Ramchandrapuram

	Name	Village	Remarks
44.	Kambham Narasimha Reddy	W. Bhuvanagiri,	Organiser, June 1951
*45, 46.	Gokula Mattam Reddy (Mattayya)	Ramannapeta taluka	Organiser, shot dead and his wife raped to death
47	Harijan Papayya	Kanchalagudem	Farm servant or Gokula Mattayya
48.	Rajayya	Pikilipuram	– Do –
49.	Maruthi	Chipralagunta near Aleru	
50.	Tirupati	– Do –	18.12.1950
51, 52.	Two others	– Do –	– Do –
53.	Satani Kumarayya		Killed in Rajagiri hills
54.	Pooram Somayya		– Do –
55.	Sampat Muthayya	Rammannapeta taluka	Madakonda hills, 6.10.1950
56.	Arjuna Bhadrayya	– Do –	31.10.1950
57.	Harijan Ellayya	Vemulawada	
58.a.	Harijan Ramaswamy	– Do –	
b.	Two	Eduluru	
c.	Two	Bollaram	
59, 60.	One Muslim supporter and another	Bommajipalle	
61, 62.	Salayya and another	Raghavapuram	Party members
63.	Agricultural worker comrade	Raghavapuram	Squad member, joined the Vikarabad squad, shot dead there
64.	Gosika Venkayya	Pillayipalli	Shot dead
65.	Beereddi Rami Reddy	Pillayipalli	– Do –
66.	Vadla Yadagiri	Pillayipalli	Both were burnt alive in November 1948. They had cultivated the landlords' pasture land
67.	Harijan Kommu Venkayya		
68.	One person		Shot dead at Huzurnagar hillocks, July 1950.
69.	Mangali Narasimhulu	Mogilipaka	Party member

	Name	Village	Remarks
70.	Kavali Narayana	- Do -	Burnt alive during
71.	Kavali Somayya	- Do -	Razakar days along with three other peasants of Pulligilla
72.	Sathi Reddy	Ausapuram	Supporter
73–76.	Supporters	Polepalli	Shot dead after guerrillas killed Neelam Raji Reddy
77–78.	Two comrades Madharam		Squad members, shot dead by police after Pannala landlords' properties were destroyed
79.	One person		Shot at Chintolla
80–86.	7 persons		Killed in Dulakapalli forests
87–90.	3 persons		Parvatipuram hills
91–93.	3 persons		Near Nakrekallu, Nalgonda taluka, 9.8.1949
94–103.	Chakali Krishnayya and 9 others		In Bhuvanagiri taluka
104–105.	Two persons	Chandrapalli	Kondapuram forests
106.	One person	Tirapathi	
107.	One person		Rachakonda hills
108.	One person	Kodampeta Rapaka	
	During Razakar Days		
**1–20.	Renigunta Rami Reddy and his squad of 20	Renigunta	
21–24.	Pusuloji Veerayya,	Gundlagudem	Killed at Aleru
	Chinnam Komarayya,	- Do -	
	Marpu Pullayya,	- Do -	
	Birru Narayana	- Do -	
25–37.	Kandada Balireddy and 12 of his squad	Lakshmidevigudem	
38–49.	12 persons (names given earlier)	Bollepalli	
50–76.	Pulligilla—22 persons including two from Mogilipaka		Shot dead, five burnt alive

	Name	Village	Remarks
77.	Kongara Gandi Reddy	Peddagudem	Killed by Razakar firing in an ambush attack on Razakars at Kanchalagudem
78.	Parkala Malla Reddy	Addagudur	Village elders, distributed 600 acres of land
79.	Somi Reddi Rami Reddy	- Do -	
80.	Kanneboyina Sayanna	Adimpeta	Died in the raid on the Addaguduru Razakar camp
81.	Podichedu Lingayya	Anajipuram	- Do -
82.	Ganti Papi Reddy	Kapparayipalli	Died during cavalry raid
83.	Kandukur Mallaya	Adimpeta	- Do -
84–89.	Katari Somayya, Matsa Veeramallu. Venkayya, Veerayya, Pannala Papeyya and one other		Died during the raid on the Addaguduru Razakar camp
90.	Parna Janaki Reddy		Died in Ammanabrolu camp attack
91.	Guggilld Narasayya (alias MalUyya)		- Do -
	Ibrahimpatnam Taluka		
1.	Doma Narayana Reddy	Manchala	Squad member Shot dead after guerrillas
2,3	Two persons		killed Lingmmpalli Patel
4.	Kandikanti Jammayya Harijan	Anantaram	Medical practice, village leader, reported by Julur landlords and was shot dead
5.	Gantu Hanumantu	Nomula	Also shot dead in the above incident
6–10.	Chandrayya Squad member and four persons (including Buda Ramulu)	Mylaram	Arrested during agricultural labour strike and shot dead in Arutla camp

	Name	Village	Remarks
11 a.	Gunukula Somayya	Chennareddigudem	Two shepherd brothers of Ellamma Tanda, shot dead in Arutla camp, as they seized back their lands from the landlords
b.	Gunukula Mallayya		
12.	Dappu Devulu	- Do -	Lambadi farm servant
*13.	Baddam Narayana	Kondamadugu	Agricultural worker comrade, leader of many strikes, shot dead, 8.12.1950
14.	Panjala Narasimham	- Do -	
15.	Mysayya	Chevikonda	18.11.1950
16.	Tirupatayya	Salabhanapuram	- Do -
17.	Lambadi Somulu	Gowrelli	Killed for throwing leaflets into police camp
18.	Peddayya	Gaddi Malkapuram	
19.	Bakkaya	- Do -	
20.	Bakkayya's father	- Do -	
21-23.	Three harijans	Pilapalapadu	Shot dead
24.	One person	Tatiparti	Ekkuvapalli Narayana Reddy's farm servant
25.	One person	Chintolla	Shot dead at instigation of landlords
26.	Ramayya	Vikarabad area	Shot dead because they seized back anyakrantalu lands
27.	Balayya	- Do -	
28.	Sangayya	- Do -	
29.	Lakshmanna (T.Lakshmana-murthy)	Ramachandrapuram taluka	Student cadre, organiser, retreated to Vikarabad area, tied to tree, tortured and shot dead
30.	Pitchi Reddy	Guraja	Student, organiser in Ibrahimpatnam taluka, killed in Kottur
31.	Komarayya	Hyderabad city	Student leader
32.	Ganapathi	- Do -	alias Mallayya

	Name	Village	Remarks
	Mahboobnagar District		
1.	Chenchu Ramayya	Umamaheswaram forests	May 1950
2.	Chakali Kasayya	Jappulapalli	– Do –
3.	China Papayya	Reguvaram forests	– Do –
4.	Konda Veerayya	Apparajupalli forests	October 1950
5.	Vajja Naraaimham	Kottapalli	– Do –
*6.	Balaswamy	– Do –	– Do –
	Madhira Taluka		
*1.	B. Seshayya	Chirunomula	
2.	Katta Ramakottayya	– Do –	
3.	Bodepudi Punnayya	– Do –	
4.	Rowtu Narayya	Khammampadu	
5.	Veguta Narayana	Khanapuram	Died of T.B. in Cuddalore Jail
6.	Kukka Venkateswarlu	Khanapuram	
7.	Vegunta Jogayya	– Do –	Died in Cuddalore Jail
8.	Kolikonda Raghavayya	Kurnavelli	police firing, 11.8 and 11.10.1950
9.	Buchayya (?)	Enukur	
10.	Devabhaktuni Narasayya	Gandagalapadu	
11.	Talluri Kodanda Ramayya	Lachhugudem	
12.	Matta Musalappa	Lachhugudem-Pentapalli	16.3.1950
13–14.	Two squad members	Dammapeta	26.4.1950
15.	Yelamandala Chandrayya	Allapadu	29.4.1950
16.	Manda Achhayya	– Do –	– Do –
17.	Gorremuchhu Ajarayya	Vallapuram	– Do –
18.	Maddi Ramulu	– Do –	– Do –
*19.	Motarapu Ramachandrayya	Govindapuram	(and four others of Khammam and Nandigama talukas were shot dead nearby. Memorial erected at Govindapuram and homage paid every year to them)

	Name	Village	Remarks
20.	Kanjari Lakshmayya	Medepalli	
21.	Samineni Ramulu	- Do -	
22.	Venkatayya	Medepalli forests	Shot dead. May 1950
23.	Mallayya	Enukur Forests	
24.	Pochayya	- Do -	
25.	Parsa Rajulu	Bendalapadu	7.6.1950
26.	Paddam Dharmayya	- Do -	- Do -
27.	Paddam Ramayya	- Do -	- Do -
28.	Chimala Tirupati	- Do -	- Do -
29.	Padmayya	- Do -	- Do -
30.	Pullayya	- Do -	- Do -
31.	Seru Venkanna	- Do -	- Do -
32-36.	One Koya Comrade shot dead along with four others, Bendalapadu		
37.	Lingam	Rajaram Forests	
38.	Jogappa	- Do -	
39.	Venkataswami	- Do -	
40.	Ramalla Kanakayya	Gandagalapadu	
41.	Lagadapali Gopayya	Dendukur	
42.	Nallamala Gopayya	Brahmanapalli	Arrested from Chandolu while ill, kept in Warangal jail for some time and shot dead (after landlord of Arekayalapadu was killed by guerrillas)
	Narayana Reddy Pitchi Reddy	Brahmanapalli	Brothers, joined movement in their teens. Developed as good organisers and squad commanders. These two were taken from Khammam jail along with Sankranti Ramachandrayya of Lalapuram, S. Lakshminarayana and another of

	Name	Village	Remarks
			Muthagudem and were shot dead in Lacchugudem forests at the time of Indian army intervention.
43.	Gangu Yellayya	Pusalapadu	Agricultural labour comrade, shot in Kesinapalli forests
44.	B. Narasimhayya	Atukur	Was shot dead in Edupalagudem, Mulugu taluka
45.	Chelmayya	Proddutur	Tortured by the landlord and killed Squad commander
46.	Nageshwar		
47.	Matta Venkateswarlu	Nereda	
48.	Chakali Mutyalu	Nereda	
49.	Ambayya	Dwarasamudram	
50.	Anantapuneni Bhadrayy		Killed in Kamanchikallu, 20. 10. 1949
51.	Medaramatla Muthayya		- Do -
52.	Kadirivelu		- Do -
53.	Gopayya	Bucchireddipalem	Party militant, caught and handed over fleeing Razakars to Indian military. Congress leaders recognized him and got him shot
54.	Domatalli Pakir	Yerrboyinapet	Courier, caught and tortured in Gampalagudem camp, Krishna district, shot dead, December 1950
55.	Kongara Atchayya	Rampimalla Mallavaram	April 1950
56.	Yanamaddi Ramayya	Motamarri	Joined as student, fought against police till the end in Yatalakunta

	Name	Village	Remarks
	During Razakar Days		
**1.	Madhava Reddy	Kalkota	Squad commander
2-6.	Five		Taken from Khammam jail at the time of the Indian army intervention and shot dead in Lacchugudem forests. Names were given earlier.
	Khammam Taluka		
*1.	Machha Veerayya	Gokinepalli	Area leader
2.	Krishnamurthy		Squad commander
*3.	Gangavarapu Sreanivasa Rao	Venkatayapalem	Member of Sreenivasa Rao Squad
4.	Sivayya	- Do -	- Do -
5.	Chandrayya	- Do -	- Do -
6.	Peda Malsur	- Do -	- Do -
7.	China Malsur	- Do -	- Do -
8.	Chintagutti Ramulu	Venkatayapalem	
9.	Ravella Pitchayya	Venkatayapalem	Razakars shot him dead
10.	Jangam Bhadrayya	Sudinepalle	At Thettalapadu on 14.4.1949
11.	Devaswamy	Thettalapadu	Tied hand and foot, trampled on, testicles squeezed, head bashed by stones and killed as he refused to reveal whereabouts of a leader.
12.	Mokka Pullayya	Sibilapuram	
13.	P. Venkatanarayana	Sibilapuram	Shot at Chennaram, 27.7.1949
14.	Narayana	Keśhavapuram	Pindiprolu squad leader, died of cholera
15.	Ravulapalli Seetaramayya (alias Krishnamurthy)	Bodulabanda	Shot dead, 1.9.1949 at Gubbagurti forests

	Name	Village	Remarks
16.	Rayala Bucchappa		Koya courier
17.	Rayala Butchayya		Squad commander, Arekayalapadu forests, shot dead
18.	His squad member		– Do –
19.	Kumaraswamy	Muthagudem	Militants, 20.4.1950
20.	Jaggayya	– Do –	Tallapenta forests
21.	Madupalli Veeraswamy		All four were shot dead near Govindapuram, Madhiia taluka. Memorial erected
22.	Samineni Gopayya	Repallewada	
23.	Tammina Butchayya	Repallewada	
24.	Kilaru Venkayya (Appayya)	Nandigama taluka	
25.	Ramayya	Nacharam forests	12.5.1950
26.	Gopayya	– Do –	– Do –
27.	Venkatappayya	– Do –	– Do –
28.	Tati Mutyalu	– Do –	– Do –
29.	Sattayya	Vanamarri-Krishnapuram	On 1.12.1950, shot dead at Gubbagurti
30.	Devayya	– Do –	– Do –
31.	Bagam Veerayya	Motapuram	
32.	Nara Pangula Latchayya	Pammi	All from harijans, earning their livelihood as rickshaw workers, but the police arrested them and brought them back to Pammi and shot them dead
33.	Rayavarapu Muthayya	– Do –	
34.	Rayavarapu Gopayya	– Do –	
35.	Seshayya	Simhapudi	Shot dead along with Panditapuram comrades
36.	Battula Pullayya	Nagulancha	Agricultural labour comrade, leader of their strike struggles. Died in Gulbarga jail
37.	Muttarasi	Papatapalli	

	Name	Village	Remarks
38.	Jagannatham	Kattagur	20.1.1951
39.	One militant Kattagur		
40–45.	Six persons		In the forests of Tanikella
46–59.	Fourteen persons		In Khammam 'cage' jail
*60–61.	Pusuluri Satyam & Lingayya (Area courier)		
	During Razakar Days (Madhira Taluka)		
1–6.	Tota Venkayya, Totu Lalayya, Bandi Veerayya, Mettala Sreeramulu, Lakkisetti Lakshminarasayya, Ratakonda Veerayya	Meenavolu	Died but the Razakars had to flee 13.1.1948
7–9.	Rampalli Ramayya, Pilla Kotayya, Sukab -hoga Mutthayya	Meenavolu	Were killed in reprisal raid day again
10.	Pagidapalli Jogayya	Kalkota Rayanapeta	Shot dead at Bonakalu
11.	Bodepudi Pullayya	Kalkota village, Rayanapeta	Shot dead at Bonakalu
12.	Mutthayya	Proddutur	
13.	Maccha Patuyya	Siripuram	
14.	Talluri Appayya	Siripuram	
15.	Vasireddi Kotayya	Arekayalapadu	Killed in Gumpena raid
	11. Kothagudem (Palvancha) Taluka		
*1.	Soyam Gangulu	Banjara	
2.	Soyam Veerayya	- Do -	
3.	Venkayya	- Do -	
4.	a . Another b. Kaka Bujji	- Do -	Koya leader
*5.	Kunja Mutyalu		Area scout and squad commander
*6.	Ramayya	Nacharam forest	5.5.1950
7.	Gopayya	- Do -	- Do -
8.	Venkatappayya	- Do -	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
9.	Venkamma	Nacharam forest	5.5.1950
10.	Purnandam	Suravaram forests	Earlier acted as couriers of Comrade Seshagiri Rao, on 12.5.1950
11.	Surani Peddulu		
12.	Tati Mutyalu		
13.	Gogam Jogayya	Cheepurigudem	
14.	Tati Kotayya	Sitanagaram	24.12.1950
15.	Sivayya	- Do -	- Do -
16.	Venkatayya	Bodlu	24.11.1950
17.	Nagayya	- Do -	- Do -
18.	Payam Kakkaya	- Do -	- Do -
19.	E. Sitayya		1.1.1951
20.	P. Lakshmayya		- Do -
21.	S. Venkayya		- Do -
22.	Kesari Gopayya	Sitaramnagaram (Burgampadu)	15.1.1951
23.	Kotayya	Sitaramnagaram (Burgampadu)	15.1.1951
24.	Subba Rao	Kothagudem	
25–26.	Two Comrades	Khambalapalli forests	
27–29.	Two Comrades	Korisirala forests	
30–38.	Nine persons	Kothagudem forests	5.8.1950
39–52.	Fourteen persons	Palvancha forests	First week of October 1950
	About 300 Persons Including Women and Children Round About Allapalli Camp During Razakar Days		
**	Com. Seshagiri Rao and his companions		Leader of mine workers, Kothagudem
	Manukota Taluka		
*1 a.	Dondeti Pullayy	Pindiprolu	23.7.1949
b.	Rayala Jagayya	- Do -	
2–4.	Three killed	Near Torruru	
5.	Balli LAkshminarasu	Bojjannapeta	Centre organiser

	Name	Village	Remarks
6.	Dasari Narasayya	Bojjannapeta	Centre organiser
7.	Mula Veerayya (of Peernaki)	Bojjannapeta	Killed in forests
8.	Gandra Lakshminarasu		20.8.1949
9–10.	Two	Garla	9.9.1949. Thrown on thorny bushes and danced upon to death
*11.	M. Chandrayya	Pedamuparam	18.10.1949
12.	Akkulu and Squad member		Killed in Bodlada hillocks
13.	A peasant		26.1.1949
14–15.	Two supporters	Bodladaguda	
16.	Pittala Gopayya	Chinamupparam	18.11.1949 at Kakaravayi, shot dead
17.	Gunda Yellayya	- Do -	- Do -
	Venkanna and Pullanna killed in Chinamupppram when raiding Razakar camp		
18.	Doddu Sitaramulu	Pindiprolu	Village leader, 13.11.1949
19.	Ramu		And his squad member shot dead at Chintapalli
20.	Mallayya	Ulepalli	His neck pressed between two lathis. Organ pierced by pins to extract secrets in vain
21.	Chatta Ramulu	Inugurti	Body burnt with cigarette butts to get the where-abouts of son-in-law
22.	Seeta Ramulu	Inugurti	25.10.1951
23.	Mala Sangamayya	Mangalagudem	21.2 1950
24.	Duggayya	Ottayigudem	25.3.1950
25.	Peddala Padugayya	Battulapalli	25.3.1950
26.	K. Sitaramayya	Bayyaram	8.4.1950
27.	Veesam Ramulu	Marrigutta forests	1.5 1950
28.	Kaka Ramulu (of Damjalapuram)	- Do -	- Do -
29.	Kesari Adeppa	- Do -	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
30.	Kunja Mutyalu	Marrigutta forests	1.5 1950
31.a.	Reddimalla		
b.	Bakayya	Kummarikuntla	Centre organiser, head bashed with stones to death
32.	Badri Narayara	Sudinepalli	Squad commander, December 1948
33.	Ulle Satyanarayana	K.Samudram	Squad commander
34.	Venkatayya	- Do -	25.10.1951, agricultural labour squad member
35.	Chakali Narasayya	- Do -	
36.	Panikara Lakshmayya	- Do -	
37.	Yerraboyina Ramulu	- Do -	Courier
38.	Mallayya	- Do -	Koya courier
39.	Guravayya	- Do -	Agricultural labour courier
40.	Kataya	Mulakalapalli	14.5.1950, Courier
41.	Lakshmi	- Do -	- Do -
42.	Vajjapeda Veerayya	Chirumalla forests	
43.	Potam Bucchayya	- Do -	
44.	Saiduboyina PApayya	- Do -	
45.	Aloru Venkayya	Kanchapalli forests & Alligadda	29.11.1950
46.	Aloru Ramulu	- Do -	- Do -
47.	Chinta Errayya	- Do -	- Do -
48.	Vanam Potayya	- Do -	- Do -
49.	Koya Ramakka	- Do -	- Do -
50.	Erakapati Lakshmayya	Bayyaram forest	30.11.1950
51.	Karreddi Bucchireddi	- Do -	- Do -
52.	Veerachari (swami) of Suddarevu	- Do -	3.1.1951
53.	Nagulu	Jammalapalli forest	4.1.1951
54.	Padugu Posayya	- Do -	- Do -
55.	Kalipaka Ramulu	- Do -	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
56.	Posya Mallayya	Jammalapalli forest	4.1.1951
57.	Veesam Balayya	Irusalapuram	
58.	Joganna	- Do -	
59-60.	Two comrades	Seetayagudem forests	24.12.1950
61.	Kosam Atchayya	Somulagudem	26.12.1950
62.	Kanji Kanakayya	Chettapalli forests	- Do -
63.	Senapa Jogayya	Bothadu	- Do -
64.	Balaraju and	Timmampeta	1st week of December 1950
65-66.	Two couriers	(Narsampeta taluka)	
67.	Raghavayya	Garlagadda	1st week of December
68.	One courier		
69.	Rajanna	Jaggannagudem	2nd week, December 1950
70.	Duggila Pandayya	Kothagudem village, Garla Jagir	
71.	Murti Pullayya	- Do -	
72-73.	Another two	- Do -	
74.	Arepalli Veerayya	Kaluvala	
75.	Tallapalli Narasayya	Sreeramgiri	Courier
76-77	Lakshmayya and his companion	Apparajipalli Allinagar	

During Razakar Days

1.	D. Venkateswar Rao	Garla	
2-7.	Two squad members and four villagers	Devunisankeesa	By Razakars
8-9.	Two militants	Tallapusapalli	By Razakars
10-11.	Two	Chinnamupparam	

More Than 300 Were Killed in Manukota Taluka Manukota Party Cadre Losses (From January to June end, 1950)

(These could not be identified. May be repeated. Still giving as found in files—P. S.)

1.	Venkataratnam	Garla Jagir (Manukota taluk)	Courier. Enemy elements caught him police shot him dead

	Name	Village	Remarks
2.	Gattayya	Garla Jagir	Squad member, died of smallpox
3.	Charles		Squad member, Enemy agents caught him and police shot dead
4.	Pullayya	– Do –	– Do –
5.	Konda Veerayya	– Do –	Courier, police surrounded and shot him dead
6.	Venkatayya	Pakhala (Narsampet taluka)	Squad member, police shot him dead
7.	Somulu	– Do –	– Do –
8.	Danayya	– Do –	– Do –
9.	Bhimayya	Chete-Mupparam	Courier, was betray, ed. Police shot him dead
10	Padmayya	Tungaturti (Suryapet taluka)	Centre organiser, police surrounded and shot him dead
11.	Mysayya	– Do –	Courier, police surrounded and shot him dead
12.	Komarayya	Tungaturti (Suryapetat taluka)	Courier, police surrounded and shot him dead
13.	Lakshman	Jangaon taluk	– Do –
14.	Vasu	– Do –	Police surrounded and shot him dead
15.	Dasu	– Do –	Centre organiser, police surrounded and shot him dead
16.	Rangayya	– Do –	Squad member, police surrounded and in the skirmish was shot dead
17.	Manohar	– Do –	*Zonal* committee member, police surrounded him and in the skirmish shot him dead
18.	Venkatayya	– Do –	Courier, police surrounded him and in the skirmish was shot dead

	Name	Village	Remarks
19.	Guttayya	Jangaon taluk	Squad member, police surrounded him and in the skirmish was shot dead
20.	Balayya	Gundala	Squad member, died of small pox
21.	Nallela Ramulu	- Do -	Squad member, died of T.B.
22.	Jogayya	- Do -	Zonal commander, surrounded by police and shot dead
23.	Squad Member	- Do -	Enemy agents betraved Police shot him dead
24.	Balaraju	Warangal taluka	Zonal committee member enemy betrayed
25.	One courier	- Do -	- Do -
26.	One courier	- Do -	- Do -
27.	Nandayya	- Do -	squad commander, shot dead by police who surrounded him
28.	Sankar	- Do -	Squad Deputy Commander, shot dead by police who surrounded him
29.	Ammayya	- Do -	Courier, shot dead by police who surrounded him
30.	Mattayya	Warangal taluka	Courier, enemy agents betrayed. Police shot him dead
31.	Ragayya	- Do -	Centre organiser
32.	Chalapati	- Do -	Centre organiser, enemy agents betrayed. Police shot him dead.
33.	One courier	- Do -	Enemy agents betrayed. Police shot him dead
34.	Ramanatham	- Do -	Courier, Betrayed by enemy agents and was shot

	Name	Village	Remarks
35.	Dharmayya	Warangal taluka	Courier, Betrayed by the enemy agents and was shot dead
36.	Kotayya	- Do -	- Do -
37.	Bucchayya and		
38.	Seetaramayya	Illendu	
	Illendu Taluka		
1.	Punnayya (Battula Veeraswamy)	Nagulancha, Khammarn taluka	Killed at Panditapuram. Carried out many successful ambushes on military patrols, killed four gurkhas near Allapalli camp, raided Nanjappa camp at Gangaram Sathipalli raid
2.	His companion Chandramouli (Kannayya?)	Panditapuram	
3.	Butchayya	Panditapuram	
4.	Sheikh Lai	- Do -	Betrayed by Mamillapalli landlords, refused to reveal anything, tortured to death
5.	Yeesam Bhupati	Panditapuram	Killed at Allapalli camp
6.	Yenigapati Nagayya	Tallagudem	Organiser, shot dead on his way from Koppurayi, to border
7.	Chenchu Lakshmayya	Eluguballi	8. 11. 1949, Koya, tortured and shot at K. Samudram
8.	A Koya youth	Alligudem	14.11.1949
9.	A guerrilla squad member		15.11.1949, while crossing River Godawari
10.	Varada Mutyalu	Mylavaram	1.5.1950
11.	Sreeramulu	Vamanadeva forests	2.5.1950
12.	Balayya	- Do -	- Do -
13.	Kondru Rajayya	Near Mogarala Hillocks	3.5.1950
14–16.	Three comrades		7.5.1950, In forests between Chintapalem Nellipaka

	Name	Village	Remarks
17.	Kasam Marraju		14.5.1950, Forests of Chandrayyapalem
18.	Venkatappayya		
19.	Sara Lakshmayya		- Do -
20–21.	Two comrades	Kappala Banjaru	
22.	One peasant	Gangaram	19.4.1950
23.	20 women	Sompalli	Raped to death
24.	Mekala Lingayya	Pantarapadu forests	13.10.1950
25.	Mokka Muthayya	- Do -	- Do -
26.	Padigala Seshayya	Ramavaram forests	- Do -
27.	Venu (Narasimhayya alias Krihnamurthy)	Ramavaram forests	These three may be Venu Balu and Anandam of mining area, Ramavaram forests Dec.1950
28.	Rangayya	- Do -	
29.	Pullayya	- Do -	
30.	Ramam Pullayya	Gundala area	
31.	Nandi Balayya	- Do -	
32.	Rajayya	- Do -	
33.	Bhupati	Yerrayigudem	22.1.1951
34.	Apparao	Kamalapuram	- Do -
35.	Suluri Sammayya		
36.	Kalti Ramayya	Devalagudem	
37.	Sagiboyina Gutthayya	- Do -	
38.	Kunja Bucchi Ramulu	Lingagudem	
39.	Butchayya	- Do -	
40.	K. Bhumayya	- Do -	
41.	Kalti Narsayya	- Do -	
42.	Matta Venkateswarlu	Chandrapalem	8.1.1951
43.	Lalu (Saidulu)	Raghavapuram forests	25.1.1951
44.	Narayan Das	Bommanapalli	9.3.1951
45.	Gopayya	- Do -	- Do -
46.	Bhimayya	- Do -	- Do -
47–48.	Two couriers	Budathempadu	
49.	One courier	Lingala	

	Name	Village	Remarks
50.	Totem Guttayya	Sompalli village	Squad member, betrayed by Koya elder Killed in the raid in Gundala Chenigapuram camp
51.	Koya Narsaysa		

About 300 were Shot Dead in Gadipadu and Gundala Camps Narsampeta (Pakhala)

— Mulugu Talukas

1.	Rosayya	Allapuram	Laid on his back, stones hurled at his head, to death
2.	Durga Lachhyya	Pakhala forests	5.6.1950
3.	Abdul Hussain	- Do -	- Do -
4.	Rami Reddy Kumarayya		
5.	Ramireddy Narasayya		
6.	Tata Muttayya		Shot dead between Narlapur-Islampur (Mulugu taluka)
7.	Mogali Venkatayya	Chandralapalem Palvancha forests	24-10-1950
8.	Kandula Nandayya	Timmapuram forests	Squad Commander
9.	Penti Sankarayya	- Do -	Deputy Commander
10.	Golla Ailayva	- Do -	
11.	Golla Chokkayya	- Do -	
12.	Narahari Rao	- Do -	
13.	Aluboyina Narasayya	Pancha Pandavula Gattu	26.11.1950
14.	Basiboyina Narasayya	- Do -	- Do -
15.	Narastmhulu	- Do -	- Do -
16.	Burra Agayya	- Do -	- Do -
17.	Alloru	Penukonda forests	Redlawada squad
18.	Uppala Venkatayya	- Do -	- Do -
19.	Chakali Yakayya	- Do -	- Do -
20.	Another comrade	- Do -	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
21.	Sitaramayya	Raghaboyinagudem	8. 1.1951
22.	Mallela Latchayya	Pegadapalli	Koya comrade
23.	Pitchayya	Nagaram	- Do -
24.	Bugga Kammayya	Jangalapalli	- Do -
25.	Peddapoyina Pappayya	Gorimalla Forests	
26.	Pullayya	Yallarugudem hills	
27.	Kalti Atchayya (Alias Ramulu)	Cheemalagudem	Killed while exploring Bastar area
28.	Narsayya	- Do -	- Do -
29.	Mokalla Sammayya	Penugonda	
30.	Kunja Narsayya	- Do -	
31.	Erpa Kannayya	- Do -	
32.	Penaka Sammayya	- Do -	
33.	Pendakatla Narsayya	- Do -	
34.	Nalipeda Butchayya	- Do -	
35.	Mankidi Atchayya	- Do -	
36.	Bandalasati Narayana	Neelala Narsapura	
37.	Mallela Nandayya	Tagadipalli	
38.	M. Sankarayya	- Do -	
39.	Sattem	- Do -	
40.	Uke Peda Potayya	Lingala	
41.	Uke Rajayya	- Do -	
42.	Misi Ramayya	Yellapuram	
*43-44.	Bhashu and Ramalu	Mulugu taluka	
*45-46.	Ramu and Bhallu	- Do -	
47.	One supporter	Gangaram	19.4.1950
48.	One supporter	Pakhala forests	1.6.1950
49-55.	Seven militants	Mulugu forests	5.10.1950
56.	One comrade	Pakhala taluka	
57.	One comrade	Patarapalli	13.10.1950
58-63.	Six comrades	Marapu forests	13.10.1950
64-67.	Four Comrades	Gangaram	22.10.1950
68.	One comrade	Tantivaripalem	6.12.1950

	Name	Village	Remarks
69–70.	Two comrades		Between Ramanujapuram and Buddhavaram-Mulugu taluka
71–79.	Nine militants	Pakhala-Mulugu forests	
80–94.	Fifteen persons taken from Narsampeta camp jail to Kothagudem camp and shot dead.		
	Jangaon and Warangal Talukas		
*1.	Gabbeta (Gangasani) Tirumala Reddy		Gabbeta
*2.	Rekula Lakshma Reddy	Belongs to Khammam Dist.	Joined the squad as student in Warangal
3.	Bakkayya	Sitarampuram	
4.	Jalli Ailayya	Chintapalli	6.8.1949
5.	Chimala Balayya	- Do -	- Do -
6.	Vasi Rami Reddy	- Do -	- Do -
7.	Bheema Rao		Died as undertrial of T.B.
8.	Looma Lambadi	Mundrayi	2.3.1950
9.	Venkayya	- Do -	- Do -
10.	Yerra Narasayya	Bongaralagunta	9..10.1950
11–16.	and six others		
17.	Atcha Sagilayya	Mahadevapuram	30.10.1950
18.	Abba Saiga	Varijapeta	
19.	Muthayya	Visnur	Burnt alive in a hayrick
20.	Venkata Narasimha Reddy	Chennur	
21.	Bhadrayya	Madhavapuram	Courier, caught and killed
22.	and another	- Do -	- Do -
23.	Bokka Somayya		
*24.	Tanu		
*25.	Ganugupati Narayana Reddy		Zonal organizer and commander
*26.	Nalla Nara simhulu (Junior)		
*27.	Devasam Venkayya		
*28.	Basavayya, Samuel and Ailayya		

	Name	Village	Remarks
29.	Sayyad Samuel	Vadlakonda	Shot dead
30.	Sivaratri Balayya	- Do -	- Do -
31.	Dondigala Balayya	- Do -	- Do -
32.	Kurmi Ailayya	Vadlakonda	Shot dead
33.	And one militant	- Do -	- Do -
34–37.	Four militants	Adivikeshavapuram	
38.	Kondapalli Narsayya		
39.	Mekala Pullayya	Maddikunta (Warangal taluka)	
40.	Dokala Papayya	- Do -	
41.	Meda Somayya	- Do -	
42.	Veesam Mutthayya	- Do -	
43.	Kotam Lokayya	- Do -	
44.	Komma Rajayya	Rajaram (Warangal Taluka)	

During Razakar Days

1.	Doddiv Komarayya	Kadavendi (Jangaon taluka)	4 July 1946
2.	Mandadi Somi Reddy	- Do -	In the Nizam police raid on Devaruppala
3.	Another comrade	Sitarampuram	- Do -
4–7.	Kottha Veeraieddy	Chitakoduru	
	Kottha Raja Reddy	- Do -	
	Kondam Hanumayya	- Do -	
	Ayyoru Ramayya	- Do -	
8–10.	3 Lambadis One militant	Erraballi, Warangal taluka Koyada	As reprisal
11.	Kummari Narasimhulu		- Do -
12–13.	Yadagiri and another comrade	Vadlakonda	Died hit by bullets
14–20.	7 persons		In Razakar and police raid, while defending village Akunuar
21.	Motam Posulu	Bairampalli	
22.	Motam Ramulu	- Do -	

	Name	Village	Remarks
23–108.	Baliju Nagayya and 85 others	Bhairampalli	Shot dead in Bairampalli
109–128.	Yembayya	Gangapuram	Siddipeta taluka
	And 19 others	Kootigallu	Shot dead
129.			
131.	Three Lambadis	Devaruppala	Burnt alive
132–153.	22 persons	Akkiraju Palli	
154–183.	30 persons	Kodakandla	
185.	Vadla Rajayya		
186.	Kampala Ailayya	Erragollapadu	Died fighting against Razakars and Nizam's police
187–189.	Three guerrilla militants		Died on raids on Tatikonda camp
	Karimnagar–Adilabad		
1.	Harishchandra Rao	Peddatandla	29.10.1950
2.	Kasim		
3.	Kunta Lakshmayya	Gundapalli hillocks	5.11.1950
4.	Kunta Sayi Reddy	- Do -	- Do -
5.	Vakil Raji Reddy	- Do -	- Do -
6.	Ramayya	- Do -	- Do -
7.	Dasamayya	- Do -	- Do -
8.	Sampati Hanumalu	Sandarla camp	4.11.1950
9.	One comrade	Sarangapur	
10-11.	Two comrades	Pannarpalli, Zahirabad taluka	16.10.1950
12.	Gundaboyina Chandrayya	Marikipeta and Sirsilla	
13.	Rami Reddy	- Do -	
14.	Rajamallayya	Siddipet (Medak Dist.)	20.3.1951
*15	K. Rangachari	Kamareddi	
16.	Latchhayya	Akkannapeta	Centre organiser
17.	One Andhra Comrade	In Karimnagar forests	
18.	Bhupati Reddy		
19.	Gowrelli Mallayya		

	Name	Village	Remarks
	During Razakar Days		
**1.	A. Prabhakar Rao		
**2.	Damodar Reddy		
**3.	Bhupati Reddy	Basireddipalli	
4.	Ramachandram	Karimnagar	Student, shot dead in Huzurabad taluka
5.	Devanandam	Warangal	- Do -
6.	Narra Gopal Reddy	Jangaon Regula Onthapuram	Shot dead at Lingampalli, Huzurabad taluka
7.	Mallareddy	Pasaramedla	- Do -
8.	Boda Ailayya	Marrigadda	- Do -
9-10.	Two comrades	Huzurabad	
	East Godavari		
1.	Kandikatla Nagabhushanam	Kadali, Razolu taluka	Dist. Agricultural labour leader, Dist. Party Secretariat member, shot dead at Yanam by Indian police
2.	Cnintamaneni Satyanarayanadas	Korumilli, Ramachandrapuram taluka	Dist. Party Secretariat member and kisan leader Party Secretariat member
3.	Penumatsa Anantam Raju	Ryali, Kottapeta taluka	
	The above two were arrested in Samalkot and tied to a tree and shot dead.		
4.	Gurram Venkata Reddy	Agricultural labour leader	Razolu taluka on 21.6.1950 shot dead
5.	Gubbala Narasimha Murthy	Malkipuram	- Do -
6.	Gubbala Venkata Reddy	Malkipuram	
7.	Alluri Bucchirama Raju	Antarvedipalem, Razole Taluka	Youth leader
8.	Sanaboyina Jagannadham	Visweswarayapuram	
9.	Rapaka Suryanarayana	Mori	Agricultural labour leader
10.	Nanduri Subba Rao	Bheemanipalli, Amalpuram taluka	

	Name	Village	Remarks
11.	Kandikatla Yesuratnam	Battulanka. Amalapuram taluka	1949
12.	Donga Narasimha Murthy	- Do -	21-6-1949
13.	Bomma Basavaraju	Peddapuram	Handloom weaver leader
14.	Dr. Veerayya	Kakinada	Died of snake bite while U.G.
15.	Parvataneni Venkateswar Rao	Guntur Dist.	Hunted by police, fell in well in the dark and died
16.	T. Lakshmana Murthy	Ramchandrapuram taluka	Shot dead in Vikarabad area
17.	Anaparti Ramanna	Edida, Rajahmundry taluka	Hanged in 1951 as involved in killing village munsiff
	West Godavari		
1.	Perepa Mrityanjayudu	Achanta, Narsapur taluka	Dist. Sectt. member, State Committee member, 16.5.1950
2.	Narra Anjaneyulu	Pedapadu, Eluru taluka	Dist. Secretariat member, 24.5.1950
3.	Edpuganti Purnachandra Rao	Pedamaddali, Gudivada taluka	Dist. Secretariat member, 16.6.1950
4.	Padala Subba Rao	Ullamparru (Narsapur taluka)	Taluka leader, 24.5.1950
5.	Rudraraju Gopala Raju	Chinchinada Narsapur taluka	9.7.1950. Shot dead while on bail. Agricultural labour leader and centre organiser
6.	Rudraraju Ayyaparaju	- Do -	22.5.1950, conducted agricultural labour struggles
7.	Busi Venkata Rao	Chinchinada Narsapur taluka	Agricultural labour comrade, shot dead, 17.4.1950
8.	Busi Musalayya	- Do -	- Do -
9.	Alluri Rama Raju	- Do -	- Do -
10.	Talla Basavamallayya	Vemavaram, Narsapur taluka	Agricultural labour and weavers' leader, shot dead along with Ayyappa Raju

	Name	Village	Remarks
11.	Vegesina Sivaramaraju	Kapavaram, Narsapur Taluk	Underground, died of snake-bite
12.	Kalidindi Suryanarayana Raju	Polamuru, Tanuku taluka	Taluka leader, 10.5.1950
13.	Gandeti Narsimham	Vipparru, Tanuku taluka	18.7.1950, Courier, taluka did not reveal any secrets
14.	Devarkonda Subba Rao	Vendra, Bhimavaram taluka	9.3.1950, Kovvuru Taluka leader
15.	Borusu Manganna	Digamarru, Tadepalligudem taluka	Village leader, on bail. Police shot him dead.
16.	P. Madhava Rao	Chintalapudi taluka	Teachers, were shot dead on the ground that they were helping
17.	E. Sambayya	- Do -	the party, on
18.	P. Venkataratnam	- Do -	17.4.1950.
19-22.	Four	Bucchampet	Koya militants
23.	Garapoti Raja Ram Mohan	Pedapadu	Eluru taluka

Krishna District (Munagala Pargana Excluded) Divi Taluka

1.	Challapalli Narayana Rao	Challapalli	Agricultural labour leader, Dist. Party leader
2.	Chalasani Jagannadha Rao	Bhatlapenamarru	Dist. Secretariat Member
3.	Chalasani Srinivasa Rao	- Do -	District student leader
4.	Keerti Subba Rao	- Do -	
5.	Chalasani Rattayya	- Do -	
6.	Chalasani Kanchana Rao	- Do -	Student
7.	Dasari Nageswar Rao	- Do -	
8.	Dasari Nagabhushanam	- Do -	
9.	Ravi Bheema Rao	Pagolu	Student

	Name	Village	Remarks
10.	Dasari Bikshmayya	Chinamuktevi	
11.	Kurapati Bhairagi	- Do -	
12.	Garikipati Sivaramiah	Nagayatippa	
13.	Garikipati Sreeramulu	- Do -	
14.	Garikipati Anjayya	- Do -	
15.	Tatineni Chennayya	Movva	
16.	Mandava Venkateswar Rao	Movva	Taluka organiser
17.	Movva Venkatarangam	- Do -	
18.	Vasireddi Viswanadham	Vemulapalli	
19.	Kodali Sambhayya	- Do -	
20.	Kodali Balayya	- Do -	
21.	Ravi Subha Rao	Daliparru	
22.	Meka Subha Rao	Mekavaripalem	
23.	Meka Nageshwar Rao	Mekavaripalem	
24.	Paruchuri Rajagopala Rao	Mopidevi	
25.	Nadakuditi Lakshmipati	Chiruvollanka	
26.	Peeta Ankineedu	Chiruvollanka	
27.	Koganti Venkateswar Rao	Veluvolu	
28.	Tottempudi Narayana Rao	Chitturpu	
29.	Yelamanchili Venkateswar Rao	Velavolu	Taluka organizer
30.	Gogineni Tatayya	Swatantrapuram	- Do -
31.	Nadendla Venkata Krishnayya	Nadendlavaripalem	- Do -
32.	Merugu Sreeramulu	Kondavaram	
33.	Mandava Venkateswar Rao	Amudallanka	- Do -

	Name	Village	Remarks
34.	Smt. Viyyamma	Gajullanka	
35-37.	Three other militants	- Do -	
	Gannavaram Taluka		
38.	Chintapalli Papa Rao	Buddhavaram	Dist. Secretariat member
39.	Katragadda China Venkatrayudu	Davajigudem	Centre organiser
40.	Pamarti Subba Rao	Allapuram	
41.	Jasti Raghaviah	Gannavaram	Centre organiser
42.	Andriya	Mustabad	
43.	Irugu Noble	Telaprolu	
44.	Jasti BasavaRao	Kesarapalli	
45.	Kadiyala Narayana Rao	Katuru	Taluka organiser
46.	Edpuganti Subba Rao	Katuru	Taluka organiser
47.	Narla Tata Rao	Katuru	
48.	Cheeli Ratnam	Katuru	
49.	Nagulapalli Koteswar Rao	Mudunuru	State Party's Prajasakti Press manager
50.	Yelamanchili Ramakrishnayya	Mudunuru	
51.	Guntaka China Appi Reddy	Peda Vogirala	
52	Dronavalli Satyaprasad	Mamillapalli	Taluka organiser
53.	Ch. Kutumba Rao	Aginaparru	
54.	Yelamanchili Basaviah	Krishnapuram	
55.	Gullapalli Basaviah	Krishnapuram	
56.	Yelamanchili Krishnayya	Meduru	
57.	Parvataneni Tirumala Rao	Marrivada	

	Name	Village	Remarks
	Gudivada Taluka		
58.	Y. V. Krishna Rao	Kanumuru	Centre organiser
59.	A. V. Chalapati Rao	Vanapamula	Centre organiser
60.	A. Subba Rao	Choutapalli	
61.	M. Satyanarayana	Lingavaram	
62.	A. Narayana Rao	Koderu	
63.	Ch. Venkataratnam	Nujella	
64.	V. V. Krishna Rao	Tamirisa	
65.	P. V. Narasimha Rao	Pedamaddali	
66.	M. Narasayya	Kaikulur Taluka	
67.	E. Poornachandra Rao	Pedamaddali	Centre organiser
	Bandar Town and Taluka		
68.	Bh. Rama Rao		Trade union leader
69.	B. Purushottam		
	Nuzvid Taluka		
70.	Ch. Rajagopala Rao	Annavaram	Taluka organizer
71.	Pullayya	Rangannagudem	
	Vijayawada Taluka and Town		
72.	Parvataneni Satyanarayana	Neppalli	
73.	B. Sobhanadri	Vijayawada town	Town organizer
74.	Kanaka Rao	- Do -	
75.	Appa Rao	- Do -	
76.	B. Veerayya	- Do -	Railway worker (Pointsman)
77.	M. Venkayya	Kotikalapudi	
78.	S. Nagayya,	Velvadam	
79.	G. Koteswar Rao	- Do -	
80.	G. Purushottam	- Do -	
81.	Noble (Teacher)	Kodur	

	Name	Village	Remarks
82.	Anumarlapudi Seetarama Rao	Kodur	Dist. Party leader shot in Cuddalore jail
83.	Manne Krishnaiah	- Do -	
84.	Manne Rattayya	- Do -	
85.	Manne Pitchayya	- Do -	
86.	S. Pagidayya	- Do -	
87.	G. Borrareddy	Patapadu	
88.	M. Lakshmayya	Kotikalapudi	
89.	G. Venkatasubbiah	Ganapavaram	
90.	Y. Venkateswara Rao	Davuluru	
91.	A Comrade	Uppalur	
92.	Koneru Mallikarjuna Rao	Patamata	
	Nandigama Taluka		
93.	Tirupatayya	Indugamalli	
94.	Kilaru Venkayya (Appayya)	Kammavaripalem (?)	
	Tiruvuru Taluka		
95.	Eruva Venkatarami Reddy	Kunaparajuparva	At Vinagadagatla, his wife committed suicide under conditions of police terror
96.	Tummalapalli Gopayya	- Do -	At Dowleswaram, 14.6.1950
97.	Ponnaganti Nageshwar Rao	- Do -	At Kondapalli, 13.6.1950
98.	Kongala Veerayya	Erukapadu	At Vinagadagatla
99.	Kota Gopayya	- Do -	At Tallapenta, Khammam Dist.
100.	Kongala Abraham	- Do -	At Kallurugatla, Khammam Dist.
101.	Sangasam Pichayya		At Sambudigudem, Madhira taluka

	Name	Village	Remarks
	Guntur District		
	Sattenapalli Taluka		
1.	Sheik Ghouse Saheb	Talluru	
2.	Sheik Papa Saheb	- Do -	
3.	Pasupuleti Rosayya	- Do -	
4.	Kosana Tirupatayya	- Do -	
5.	Chennamsetti Peda Abbayi	- Do -	
6.	Sabbineni Punnayya	Nagavaram	
7.	Sheik Nanne	- Do -	
8.	Ibrahim	- Do -	
9.	Gudipudi Koteswar Rao Rentapalla	Rentapalla	
10.	Dara Ramakoti	- Do -	
11.	Madala Veerabhadrachari	Madala	
12	Chava Bhadrayya	Andukur	
13	Eluri Mangalagiri	Acchampeta	
14	Kanchi Ramakoti	Kolluru	
15.	Ghanta Nagulu	- Do -	
16	Vorla Rosayya	Pulichinta	
17	Chintirala Saidulu	- Do -	
	Narasaraopeta Taluka		
18.	Danda Narayana Swamy	Gorantlavaripalem	
19	Pilli Ankamma	Chilakaluripeta	
20	Gaddam Moshe	Veluru	
21	Kondragunta Ramulu	- Do -	
22.	Kakani Ramachandrayya	Veluru	
23.	Alla enkayya	- Do -	
24.	Katta Damodaram	- Do -	
25.	Danda Ankamma	- Do -	
26.	Mukiri Moshe	Purushottampatnam	
27.	Davala Gangayya	Yaddanapudi	

	Name	Village	Remarks
28.	Bonam Potaraju	Yaddanapudi	
29.	Mamidala Subbarao	Jonnalagadda	
	Vinukonda Taluka		
30.	Enugupalem Kotayya	Enugupalem	
	Guntur Taluka		
31.	Nelakuditi Satyanarayana	Dondapadu	
32.	Tallam Sreemannarayana	- Do -	
	Palnad Taluka		
33.	Sheik Abdul Rasul	Dachepalli	
34.	Gollamudi Narayana	Julakallu	
35.	Gurram Nagayya	Ramapuram	
36.	Gurram Kotayya	- Do -	
37.	Uppu Raji Reddy	- Do -	
38.	BhimanadulaVeera Reddy	- Do -	
39.	Akuri Kicchareddi	- Do -	
40.	Tangeda Janikamma	- Do -	
41.	Dasari Kotayya	Karalapadu	
42.	Gaddam Hussain	- Do -	
43.	Madasu Nasarayya	- Do -	
	Repalli Taluka		
44.	Kanthamneni Venkataratnam	Pallekona	
45.	Dasari Subbayya	Isukapalli	
46.	Gummidi Seetaramayya	Guddikayalanka	
47.	KAsturi Kutumbarao	Kanagal	
48.	Muthireddi Venkatachalam	Oleru	
49.	Moturu Venkataratnam	Vellaturu	

	Name	Village	Remarks
50.	Moturu Venkataratnam's daughter (three years old)	– Do –	
	Telangana		
51.	Panditaradyula Mallikarjuna Sarma	Emani	District Agricultural Labour leader
52.	Chukkapalli	Kancharlapalem	
53 a.	Nimmagadda Rattayya	Duggirala	
b.	Bhasakara Rao	– Do –	
	Bapatla Taluka		
54.	Muktinutala Lakshminarayana	Bhallukhanudupalem	Teacher, 12-5-1950
55.	Jetti Subbarao	Jupudi	4-6-1949
56.	Chivukula Sesha Sastri	Bapatla	12-5-1950
57.	Bandaru Venkatappayya	Palaparru	13-4-1950
58	Karnam Sreeramulu	– Do –	19-4-1950
59.	Nagabhairava Veerayya	– Do –	– Do –
60.	Peddipaga Prakasam	– Do –	– Do –
61.	Battula Dhanurjya	Palaparru	19.4.1950
62.	Bondalapati Ammayya	– Do –	2-5-1950
63.	Poppuri Ranga Rao	– Do –	13-5-1950
64.	Sarikonda Appayya	– Do –	– Do –
65.	Bandaru Venkateswarlu	Pandillapalli	12-5-1950
66.	Sajja Surya Balanandam	Vetapalem	– Do –
	Ongole District		
67.	Madala Narasayya	Mynampadu	
68.	Madala Kotayya	– Do –	

	Name	Village	Remarks
69.	Timmaraju Lakshminarayana	Koniki	
70.	Venkateswar Rao	Kanigiri Taluka	
	Cuddapah District		
71.	Venkata Konda Reddy	Pedapasupula	
72.	Peda Venkanna	U. Rajupalem, Pulivendula taluka	
73.	China Venkanna	- Do -	
74.	Marenna	- Do -	
75-77	Three militants	Indreswaram	Kurnool District
	Telangana (Continued)		
1-10.	Ten	Dacharam	Huzumagar-Miryalagudem
11-18.	Eight	Dharampuram Tanda	Jangaon
19.	Komarayya	- Do -	- Do -
20.	Neelam Krishnayya	Manala	Armur Taluka
21.	Kishan	- Do -	- Do -
22.	Chala Yellayya	- Do -	- Do -
23.	Mudam Mallayya	- Do -	- Do -
24.	One militant	- Do -	- Do -
25.	Lachha Naik	Kanapuram	Jagtia
26.	Janu	- Do -	- Do -
27	Chakki	- Do -	- Do -
28-29	Two peasants	Chintakunta	- Do -
	After 'Police Action'		
	One	Villapuram	Devarkonda
	Two	Ainavolu	- Do -
	Two	Bommanapalli	- Do -
	Three	Chintakunta	- Do -
	Two	Mannanur	- Do -
	Two	Gangireddipalli	- Do -
	One	Bogguladone	- Do -
	Two	Rangapuram	- Do -
	One	Regulapuram	- Do -

Appendix II

The Conditions of Agricultural Workers and of the Poor Peasantry

(We are giving below some details of the conditions of agricultural labourers and the poor peasantry in different fighting areas of Telangana during 1948-1951 as well as the demands put forward by the Andhra Mahasabha and by our squads, on the basis of which they were mobilised. These give a graphic picture of the conditions of the peasantry in contrast to the land concentration in the hands of few landlords).

Huzurnagar Taluka

In Janapadu centre, the daily wages of an agricultural or rural labourer were two seers of paddy (by measure and not by weight) in the non-busy season; and three seers in the busy season. A farm servant was paid 60-80 seers per month, or 7-10 bags of paddy per year, each bag containing 75 kg. (100 seers) of paddy. The farm servant who managed the farm of the landlord and was considered the most reliable and highest paid, used to get three meals a day and Rs. 100 per annum.

In some villages of Vijayanagar centre, in the Kapugallu centre and in the Mattampalli centre, where the lands are more fertile, and also in the black soil region, daily wages varied from three measures (three seers) of paddy or two measures (seers) of jowar in the non-busy season to 6 seers of paddy or one meal plus three seers of jowar in the busy season. In those areas, the farm servants were paid Rs. 100 to Rs. 120 per year with three meals a day, or Rs. 300 without meals.

Debts and Merest Rates

It was difficult for agricultural labourers and poor peasants to get loans. So they had to promise to pay back loans when they obtained employment during the harvest or other busy seasons, at the rate of three seers of jowar or five seers of paddy per rupee, whereas the normal price at harvest time was only three seers of paddy and two seers of jowar per rupee.

Similarly, agricultural labourers also borrowed during April - June months (i.e., the summer months when they did not have any employment) on the promise

to work at the groundnut harvesting in October-November, at miserably low wages—10 to 14 annas (60p to 85p) per 44 seers (by measure) of groundnuts dug out and shelled.

The poor and small peasants obtained loans on the promise to sell their groundnut crop at the rate of Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 per candy, though the normal price was Rs. 100 per candy. On many occasions, the poorer sections would borrow small amounts from the womenfolk at the interest rate of one anna per rupee per month.

Only the rich peasants obtained loans at the interest of Re. 1 on Rs. 100 per month, or 12 per cent per annum.

Devarkonda Taluka

In this taluka, where the lands are less fertile, and rain and irrigation facilities meagre (except in the Dindi project area), the daily wages were two measures (seers) of paddy. For millet harvesting, they were given handfuls of ripened millet crop, or grain crops *(kankulu)*, which would give about 2 measures of grain. Three measures were given during paddy harvesting.

Farm servants were paid Rs. 60 to Rs. 80, along with meals. Servants on the smaller farms were paid Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, with meals. Through the movement, an increase of generally Rs. 20 and more was won in these wages.

In the Devorkonda-Miryalagudem zone, the rate of grain interest (*nagu*) was very high. Agricultural labourers and other rural poor, who found it impossible to get any employment and had to starve before the new harvest came in, were forced to pay back one and a half measures for every measure of grain they borrowed, though the interval between borrowing and repaying might not exceed 15 to 30 days.

When the agricultural labourers borrowed cash, it was normally between 15 to 30 rupees, but they had to pay 2 to 3 per cent interest per month. Apart from this, just in order to get the loan, they were forced to give a goat or sheep or poultry as a present. Poor

peasants who took loans (usually about Rs. 50 to Rs. 60) had to repay in kind at the time of harvest and their produce was valued at a very much reduced price, thereby concealing the enormous interest to which they were being subjected. Even the rich peasant had to pay 18 per cent as interest rate in order to get a loan.

Questions and Answers

Given below are certain questions raised and answers given by squad leaders on the question over wage rates and other demands. They give a graphic idea of how the local cadre, even 20 years ago, were groping and struggling to solve urgent problems on a correct class basis.

On the question over wages, the squads carried on an agitation on the demand

of three seers per day during the harvest and equal wages for men and women. On this, the landlords raised many questions: 'How can we give three seers when the crops are not good? If more agricultural labourers than necessary flock to the fields, then how can we pay three seers to everyone? Women cannot do as much work as men, then how can we give them equal wages? 'Agricultural labourers also raised doubts as to whether it was possible for the starving day-labourers to unite and go on strike. When the demand was raised that wages should be paid by measure or weight, or in cash, and not in the old way—a bundle or sheaf of jowar or paddy, or a handful or basketful of chillies, paddy or pulses—the question was asked how the poor or small peasants could pay this for they did not have the necessary capital or reserves with them.

The answers given were:

'If the crops are not good, the landlord or the rich peasant will not employ as many labourers as he would otherwise have done. So there is no difficulty in paying the of minimum wage of three seers as demanded. Further, during the slack season, or during famine, or no-crop times, the middle and even the rich peasant employs very little members, the most urgent and essential work being carried out by their own family members and most of the labour is employed by the landlord. When a labourer works irrespective of the crop yield, he is forced to spend his labour power. There is no reduction in his toil. So whenever he is employed, he must get his full minimum wage.'

As for the question of a large number of wage-labourers flocking to the fields and trying to get whatever employment is available, this can be solved only by consciously organising the agricultural labourers into their unions; by making them collectively bargain, and collectively, in groups, taking the work available without competing with and underbidding each other. Further, it was pointed out that taking up the wage question alone would not solve the problem and hence there was the need and urgent necessity of raising the land question and the slogan of 'land to the tiller'.

As for drawing into the strike struggle those who did not have any foodgrain reserves to fall back upon, one squad leader said that if it was not possible to draw them in, they should be ignored but the strike struggle should be carried on. Another squad leader corrected him and said that the striking workers must part with all their little resources, lend to others who were starving and keep them in the strike. To make the strike successful, the farm servants as well must also be drawn in and the backing of other toiling sections also obtained. It was necessary also to raise loans or donations to provide relief to the most needy during strike periods so that the strikers did not get demoralised and the strike was not allowed to peter out. Their class-consciousness and solidarity had to be roused. If conditions permitted, as an ultimate weapon, the landlords' crops might have to be confiscated to feed the starving workers. But under no conditions, if the strike was to succeed, could there be any indifference to any section of the workers going to work and allowing them to act as blacklegs?

In one village, one of the squads took up the issue of farm servants and raised the demand of 90 seers of paddy a month as wages, while the prevailing rate was only 40 seers. The farm servants were sceptical of such a demand being conceded by the landlords. Even the sympathetic landowners hesitated to concede the demand. It just showed the weakness of our approach. Without rousing the consciousness of the agricultural workers and making them fight for their demands, which they would consider feasible and achievable, there was no use repeating propaganda slogans; it only encouraged them to look to outsiders, the armed squads, to see if they could force the landlords to concede the demands. If it could be done, that would be good. They did not realise that they themselves had to actively participate, fight and win their demand.

In one village, when we asked the peasants to go on strike, they replied that if they struck work, then the labour from the neighbouring village would come and work for the landlords. They told us: 'You force the landlords to give higher wages and we will be with you'. In another place, they pointed out that if one of our sympathisers could be made to concede this demand, then other landowners would be forced to follow the suit. The squad persuaded one of our supporters to pay the increased wage, but the other landlords refused to do the same. It was pointed out that only the collective action on the part of all the labourers would force the landlords to concede the demand and not the sweet words or a good example by a sympathetic landowner.

In another village, the labourers asked the question whether the landlords would not bring in the police if they went on strike. It was explained to them that the labourers would have to be prepared to face the police and many other difficulties to win their just demands. But by the united action of the vast masses of toilers, it was possible to win their demands.

Another question was raised about the old feudal forms of paying wages, not in fixed measures or fixed cash rates, but in the form of a handful or basketful of ears of corn, or as so many parts out of so much yield—as one bale of cotton for every 10 bales of cotton picked. Another form of feudal exploitation which enabled the landlords to pose as benevolent kind-hearted fellows was the practice of leaving in the threshing field some left-over grain, or a handful of grain, or headloads of the paddy sheaves at harvest time in place of fixed, measured amounts as wages or yearly emoluments. The question asked was, how could the small and middle peasants pay these measured wages as they would have to pay from the current harvests? One squad leader said, 'In such cases, demand one or two extra handfuls or basketfuls', whereas a woman squad member, Narsamma, said, 'Let all the labourers thresh the grain and take their wages for both harvesting and threshing, as well as for cleaning the grain, but not the old feudal handfuls. Further, the rich peasants can borrow or take as advance the necessary grain or cash, and pay the wages in fixed measures'.

Regarding the question of holidays for the farm servants, our demand was 30 days in a year. A rich peasant asked our squad leader, if the farm servant

went on a holiday, how could he alone manage his domestic work, the work on his fields and look after the cattle as well, on a festival day. Our comrade replied that either he should hire another day-labourer for that day (at an enhanced wage) or one of his family should look after the work, but he could not for this reason, deprive the farm servant of his holiday, at least on a festival day or when he was ill.

Further, when we take up the just demands of farm servants, we cannot solve all the difficulties of the landed rich or of the landlords. They have to face certain difficulties and must be prepared to lose some of their easy habits or comforts. They cannot be maintained at the cost of the farm servants. We cannot nurse illusions about accommodating liberal-minded landlords or the rich peasants and sacrifice the interests of the agricultural labourer. We must expose how the farm servants are being exploited day and night with meagre wages, no holidays and unlimited hours of work. But when we formulate these demands, they must not look fantastic and unfeasible. We must first start with holidays for important festivals and slowly, as the consciousness and organisation develop, put forward the demand for increasing the holidays to 15 and then 30 days in a year.

To achieve this, we must forge unity and solidarity between the day labourers and the farm servants. In the villages, the labourers are habituated to making preparations out of *gongura* (jute leaves) or chillies, or sometimes some ripened ears of grain, etc. We must try to help them and not allow the landlords to take advantage of them. In every labour ward, hamlet or area where agricultural labourers dwell together, we must organise them into groups and associations. This will enable our squads to meet them daily in small groups. We must also bring into the labour organisation, the large number of young labourers and the cowherds.

Without organised mass associations, there can be no people's movement.

The Question of Equal Wages for Women

Answering the argument that women were not in a position to do as much work as men, our squads used to explain: in many agricultural operations, women are equal to, or even better than men. In some operations, as for instance, separating the grain from the dust in the threshing fields, only they do the job. Only in carrying very heavy loads, a woman may be a little inferior, but she is equal in carrying ordinary loads. For that matter, even among men, some are weak and some can do more work than others, but different wages are not being paid to different men on the basis of their strength or the amount of work they are capable of doing. Then why should women be discriminated against? The landlords rake up the point of sex-differentiation as a ruse to continue their exploitation.

In the course of their campaigns, our squads met many women in small groups. They narrated their sufferings and our women cadres in the squads condemned the present superstitions and encouraged them to fight against their

sufferings. But instead of bringing out the point that their sufferings arose mainly from the social system, and the Government that maintained it, there was a tendency to attribute them mainly to the menfolk. One woman, after our squad's exhortation, went to the extent of declaring that she would make her husband cook the food. The leadership pointed out how this approach would only lead to domestic trouble, instead of the women being drawn into the fight against the present social and political system.

Another problem was that of landlords who lent at enormous usurious rates and who used to take away lambadi girls against the debts as slave girls in their households. Their idea was that after the girls grew up to marriageable age, they could sell them and recover their debts. The Lambadi people came to consider this as normal and a fate-ordained custom. Our squads were given strict instructions to campaign against this and fight it out.

Similarly, some Lambadi girls came to our women cadre in the squads and narrated how they were sold to landlords in exchange of two young cows, that they were not yet married but when they came of age, they would be sold. That was their custom. Against this custom, also, our cadre carried on campaigns.

There was this peculiar demand that one person made to a squad: a moneylender who had seduced his wife and was living with her, should be finished off and justice must be done to him. The squad replied that they would not do any such killing. But if the landlords or moneylenders coerced or seduced the women of the poorer people, we would campaign against this and prevent such practises. The women could freely choose their partners but we could not forcibly restore the women to their former husbands if they were not themselves willing to go back.

When we asked our squads, when so many women were coming to you, why did you not organise them into women's organisations, they answered that most of the women were mothers with children, and as such, it was difficult to recruit them into women's organisations which could function effectively.

Adilabad Taluka

'In this extreme northern taluka of Telangana, bordering the forest area and the tribal people, the conditions of agricultural labourers were far more backward or feudal than in any other part. There were two kinds of agricultural labourers: one, farm servants, paid in cash or kind, and another, paid a share of the net produce, on the basis of 'one bullock share', i.e., a half share of the net yield of land on every ploughland—the extent of land that could be cultivated by one plough, i.e., two bullocks. Of the total population, 70 per cent were agricultural labourers, 20 per cent poor and middle peasants having one ploughland; 5 per cent owned 2 or 3 ploughlands. Five per cent who owned four or more ploughlands, monopolised practically the whole land, cattle and cash, and employed most of the labour, paying very low emoluments.

Farm servants were paid 40–50 measures (seers) of jowar (millet) per month.

Fourteen hours of work a day, both agricultural and domestic duties, was extracted from them. They were not given any off-days even if they fell ill. They usually had grass huts, but many of them also lived in their masters' cattle-sheds. Their wives and children of 8 to 10 years of age also worked in the fields of their masters or grazed their cattle. The children were paid 30 seers of paddy. The woman were paid Rs. 40 or an equivalent amount in grain for the whole year, for working for 120 days in the year on the masters' fields or in his household. In spite of this, the family was always half-starved, and was forced to borrow from the master. Since they could never pay back their debts, they continued to work for their

masters as bond slaves. If they wanted to seek employment from some other landlords, then that landlord had to pay all the debts of the labourer to his old master. This, in fact, meant that the new master had to purchase him from the old one.

The life of the agricultural labourer who was given a bullock- share of the crop was equally miserable. He was given 40 to 50 seers of grain per month, for six months. And for the remaining 6 months, a bullock-share. Even though he was entitled to get one bullock-share, he was cheated in various ways. First, instead of counting two bullocks on ploughland, it was usually counted as three bullocks, and thus he received only one-third instead of a half share. This was especially so on two or more ploughlands, where the owner could easily manipulate the number of bullocks necessary to get the two ploughlands tilled and cultivated. Secondly, expenditure was boosted by showing (1) the seed sown as double the actual amount sown; (2) the expenditure on the feed of the bullocks; (3) the expenditure on the cost of the cotton seed (in this area, cotton was a common commercial crop); (4) the expenditure on agricultural implements; (5) on festival and social expenses; (6) high usurious rates of grain or cash rates on the loans taken by the farm servants;

The then existing wage rates for the different agricultural operations, and our demands for the same operations, were as follows:

	Existing wage rates	**Our demand**
Banderudu (field clearing, picking up stones, etc.)	2 annas (12 paise)	6 annas (37 paise)
Sowing and replanting	4 annas (25 paise)	8 annas (50 paise)
Picking cotton	6 annas per md.	8 annas per md.
Sowing cotton seed	8 annas „ „	10 annas (62 p.) „
Daily wage rate for men	Re. 1.00	Rs. 1.50 for 8 hours of work

Our demands for farm servants were:

1. 80 seers of grain per month, or Rs. 300 per year
2. 8 hours of duty per day

3. 15 days leave in a year with full Pay
4. No interest in cash or grain on loans taken by the farm servants

For those who received a bullock-share for 6 months, 80 seers per month and all other facilities as mentioned above. The bullock share should be calculated properly, deducting the actual amounts spent on *benderudu,* sowing, weeding and harvesting, the wages of a cattle boy, and government taxes. No deduction in the name of cattle-feed or in the name of interest rates.

In the struggles for wage-increase, we must mobilise the farm servants, bullock-sharecroppers and daily labourers. Against forced labour and forced levies, against bribes, against *choubeena* and *banchrai*, for abolition of old debts, for rent reduction, we must mobilise the poor and middle peasants, all tenants and all the other poor in the everyday struggles. All these struggles must be streamlined under the guiding central slogan of 'land to the tiller'.

Who are our enemies? The enemies are the *zamindars, ijaradars*, the landed rich, moneylenders, the Congress Government.

Fales Propganda of Our Enemies

They said that—

- We are inciting agricultural labourers for increased wage rates, without taking into consideration the crop-yield of the farms, thus ruining agriculture.
- The Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party are inciting class hatred and class struggle amongst the people.
- Our enemies try to wean away the middle peasants from us to their side.
- Utilising the existing castes and caste feelings among us, the toilers, they are saying, 'the bastard *malas* and *madigas* (untouchable caste people) are refusing to obey us". Thus they are trying to incite even the poor upper caste peasants against the wage labourers.
- They threaten us with Government repression and in many other ways try to frighten us.

But if we are united and if our strength grows, none of these conspiracies of the enemies will succeed.

How to Convince People About Our Demands

- Our demands do not harm the poor and middle peasants. They only hurt those who own more land, the landed rich, the landlords, the *zamindars* and the moneylenders.
- Only if the farm servants and day labourers are given increased wages and fed properly, can they work properly and produce more.
- One-plough owner does not employ farm servants. Only those who own two or more ploughs employ farm servants. We can show that their net income from agriculture is such that they can easily afford to pay the wages we

are demanding. (At the end of this circular, the figures of income for a 2-plough unit are given).

- The landed rich (the rich peasant), the zamindars, the moneylenders are the ones who rob the labourers and the farm servants and fill their grain godowns. It is they who charge enormous usurious rates of interest in cash or in grain (*nagu*) and sell their ill-gotten grain to the poor at very high prices. They exploit the labourers and rob the poor. They starve them to death.
- We must organise ourselves into agricultural labour unions and agitate through them for these demands.
- If our demands are not conceded, we must go on strike and force them to concede the demands.

The Political Goal

If all our tribulations and sufferings are to go for ever, if the land is to be obtained for all the tillers, then all these robbers and exploiters who suck our blood as leeches must be done away with. Their rule is to be abolished. Only when People's Democracy is established will we be liberated. For this, the day - labourers, the annual farm servants, the poor peasants and all those who live on toil and work must unite. All must fight for a 'workers' and peasants' raj' (*kuli-kapula rajyam koraku kotladali).*

Our Slogans

- Abolish the monopoly on land in the hands of the landed rich, landlords, money lenders, *zamindars, ijaradars* and *vatandars*. All their lands, all their ploughs, their cattle, all are to be distributed to the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants.
- Land to the tiller. Land is to be taken over by the Government (nationalise the land).
- *Patta* rights to those who are cultivating the lands now. The tenants must not give up the lands they are cultivating and they must get *patta* rights on them.
- Reduction of rents. Rent should not exceed more than the land revenue collected by the Government.
- Restoration of all the illegally seized lands (*anyakrantulu*) like *poromboke, karizkathas. Pattas* to those who are actually cultivating them.
- Cancel all debts, in cash or in grain.
- The poor people must be freely allowed to take from the forests all the grass, timber, and fuel necessary for household purposes.
- Down with capitalism. All factories to come under the control of workers. Workers must get a living wage.
- Forward to People's Democracy *(kuli-kapula rajyam*). All the poor and middle peasants and all toilers and middle classes, under the leadership of the workers.

- For a people's democratic Vishalandhra.
- Withdraw the military from Telangana.
- Remove the ban on the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party.

Income and Expenditure of One-plough Unit

Yield from this land		Expenditure	
Cotton (one *koslam*)	225.00	Taxes	10.00
Millet (600 kgs.) (Jowar)	300.00	*Danalu seed*	15.00
Togalu 249 kgs.	160.00		
Sesame (Gingelly) (oil seed) 60 kgs.	45.00	*Cotton seed*	25.00
Paddy 2 bags of paddy	70.00	Replanting and harvesting	25.00
Chillies 2 mds.	50.00	Miscellaneous	5.00
	850.00		120.00

2-plough unit

Gross income	1700.00
Expenditure	240.00
Net income	1460.00
Salary for Cattle boy	100.00
Net income	1360.00

So the owner of a 2-plough unit can pay Rs. 300 for a full-time farm servant as this would still leave him with an annual income of Rs. 1000.

- From a leaflet issued by the Adilabad Taluka Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party.

Prices of Essential Commodities in 1951 in Huzurnagar Miryalagudem Zone

Commodity Per mound of 25 lbs	Wholesale rates in Miryalagudem town Rs.an.ps.	Retail prices in villages Rs.an.ps.
Gingelly oil	20.0.0	24.0.0
Kerosene	5.8.0	9.0.0
Jaggery	6.8.0	9.0.0
Onions	4.8.0	6.0.0
Tamarind	5.0.0	8.0.0

Coconut oil	37.8.0	48.0.0
Coconut	26.0.0	32.0.0
Chillies	15.0.0	20.0.0
lldychi	75.0.0	100.0.0
Jeera	75.0.0	100.0.0
Raw arecanut	36.0.0	48.0.0
Iron	5.8.0	8.0.0
Copper	110.0.0	135.0.0
Silver per tola	2.4.0	2.6.0
Gold per tola	132.0.0	137.0.0
Bronze	68.0.0	80.0.0
Brass	80.9.0	120.0.0
Bell metal	75.0.0	100.0.0
40 yds. long cloth	80.0.0	120.0.0
Sugar (controlled) per md.	11.8.0	12.0.0
Sugar (Blackmarket) per md.	18.0.0	24.0.0
Milk tin one	2.0.0	2.4.0
Coffee per Ib.	3.4.0	4.0.0
Cigarette bundle	4.0.0	5.0.0
Tobacco per md.	18.0.0	24.0.0
Salt per rupee	20 seers	18 seers

Resolutions

Adopted by the Amarabad Regional Conference of Underground Party, Guerrilla and Political Squad Leaders in November 1951.

The Telangana peasantry has been carrying on an armed guerrilla struggle for land for the last five years. Even now they are in possession of leased lands which they are cultivating.

The peasants had taken possession of land, illegally and forcibly seized from them by the landlords as well as the surplus lands of the landlords. But the greater part of these lands was seized back by the landlords with the help of the military. Still a portion of these lands continues to be in the possession of the peasantry.

The *poromboke*, waste lands (*banjarai*), and forest reserve lands continue to be cultivated by the people, without being surrendered. Further, more and more of such land is being taken possession of and is being cultivated.

So the main task facing us is to mobilise the peasantry to resist all the efforts of the landlords and the Government who are trying to evict the peasants from land they are cultivating even now, and defend their possession of this land.

1. The Government has enacted a law, that if the peasants who are cultivating leased land do not purchase those lands within the next six months, paying three times the annual value of the crops, then the landlords can sell away these lands to anyone else they like. We must demand that the landlords should have no right to sell the lands, and *patta* rights (ownership right)

must be given to the peasants who are now cultivating them, free of *any* charges. We must mobilise and exhort the peasants to stick to their land and resist every effort to deprive them of it. We must propagate that no one else should come forward to purchase the land that is being cultivated by the peasantry.

The Government's new law has allowed the landlords to enhance the existing rents to one-third of the gross produce on wet lands, and to one quarter of the gross produce on dry or on well-irrigated lands. We must agitate and develop struggles to resist any enhancement of existing rents and for their reduction wherever they are excessive.

2. We must demand that all the land illegally seized by the big landlords from the peasantry must be restored to the peasants. We must demand that the Government enact such a law, restoring the land to the peasants. We must mobilise the people to fight to regain their lost land.
3. We must continuously carry on agitation that the Government must take over all surplus land from the landlords as this is necessary to ensure land for the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants; and the Government must distribute these lands among them.
4. We must exert fully to mobilise the people to clear all *banjarai*, *poramboke* and forest reserves, and cultivate them. We must demand that ownership *pattas* should be granted on these lands to the agricultural labourers and the poor who occupy them, and the Government should collect from them only the normal rates of taxes. (No penalties and no enhanced taxes).
5. All Party units must immediately collect details, in each area, on the extent of land concentration, the number of agricultural labour and the poor peasant families in those areas, and how much land would be obtainable in that area.

On Grain Levies

The Government has promulgated a new ordinance on the levy. According to this ordinance, all those who pay up to Rs. 12 assessment on wet lands, have to deposit paddy at the rate of 8 seers per every rupee of assessment, as levy; on dry lands they hove to deposit jowar or other millet at the rate of four seers per every rupee. Those whose assessment is over Rs. 12 (wet), or over Rs. 10 (dry), have to pay varying amounts of levy, according to a fixed scale. This scale fixes different amounts in different regions. This ordinance on the levy has been criticised and is opposed by all sections of the people. This conference condemns the Government which without introducing any changes, is proceeding to implement its ordinance.

The Government is systematically carrying on a deceitful campaign with a determined purpose, that this ordinance is very progressive. It is looting one-sixth of the produce of the poor (small) peasantry, while leaving with the big

landlords hundreds of *putties* (one *putty* is equal to 8 bags, each of 75 kgs of paddy, or 120 kgs of jowar). The ordinance makes it obligatory for even those who do not cultivate any portion of their land, or grow commercial crops, to pay levy in grain. This law makes the tenant the obligatory payee on the land he is cultivating at a rate of levy fixed on the basis of the landlord's total assessment. This is nothing but open robbery.

This conference condemns this ordinance as robbing the crop of the toiling peasantry and subjecting the poor people to the landlords' blackmarketing in foodgrains.

This conference appeals to all leftists, to all democrats, to all the people to raise a big agitation against the levy ordinance, which is nothing but an open act of robbery, and force the Government to radically change it. It appeals to the people to carry on determined struggles to resist the implementation of this levy ordinance.

On the Food Crisis

The landlord system that exploits the people is also responsible for the food crisis. The people have become victims of the present Government's anti-people policies which deepen the food crisis and force the people to starve, and succumb to various kinds of epidemics.

It must be recognised that a permanent solution to the food problem is possible only when the root cause of it, landlordism, is abolished, and when the land is distributed to the tiller. This is evident from the fact that within two years of establishing a people's democracy, China has distributed the lands to the tillers (peasants) and so has not only been able to abolish famine, but also export 10 lakh tons of rice (paddy) to our country.

Apart from the basic reason for the food crisis, due to the lack of rains in time this year, the crops have failed, the food problem has become more acute and the condition of the people is causing anxiety. On top of this, the Government, in the name of levy on the basis of assessment rates, is robbing the peasantry of its grain and reducing them to utter starvation. The Government is not prepared to solve the resulting famine situation.

The Government must import the necessary foodgrains from foreign countries, on the basis of equality (without humiliating conditions), especially, it must import from the Soviet Union and China.

The Government must keep enough grain in the villages to meet the needs of the people, and only surplus grain should be taken to the towns. For those villages which are in deficit, food-grains should be imported from outside for the following purposes:

To prevent blackmarketing and to supply foodgrains to the people at fair prices, the Government must open ration shops on a large scale, under the supervision of village people's committees.

For those people in the villages who are not in a position to purchase

foodgrains, especially tribal people like the Chenchus in the forest areas, the Government must supply them grains for free.

The landlords must be made to sell the paddy at the fair price rate of Rs. 25 per bag (75 kgs). For those who cannot pay immediately, the grain must be sold on credit, to be paid for later.

The conference appeals to all Party units to mobilise the people and lead hunger marches to the Government offices to get the above-mentioned demands fulfilled.

On Agricultural Labourers

In our Telangana struggle, the agricultural labourers were in the forefront. In many places, they had conducted big strikes for higher wages and won their demands. But now, with the cruel repression launched by the Government, the landlords are trying to suppress the agricultural labourers and force low wages upon them.

Because of the failure to organise agricultural labourers in their own strong associations, they are now unable to defend their interests under the conditions of severe repression. Hence it is necessary to organise them into Agricultural Labour Unions, and carry on struggles to defend their demands and rights. The demands of agricultural labourers are to be formulated in three different categories, depending upon the soil and the agricultural conditions.

1. Black soil: The daily wages must be four seers of jowar or millet in normal times and, eight seers in busy seasons.

   The farm servants must be paid Rs. 300 along with meals, or 15 bags of jowar or other millets.
2. Red soil: The daily wages must be three seers of jowar in normal times and six seers in busy seasons.

   The farm servants must be paid 90 seers jowar per month.
3. Sandy soil: In the least fertile soil (*galasa* lands), the daily wage must be three seers of paddy in normal times and four seers in busy seasons. The farm servants must be paid 90 seers paddy (one and a half seers of paddy is to be calculated as one seer of jowar).
4. On cattle-grazing *penta* lands in forest belts, the farm servants must be paid one seer of jowar and the necessary supplementary food auxiliaries per day, plus Rs. 200 in cash per annum or salary of Rs. 50 monthly.
5. The farm servants must get 30 days holidays in a year in all areas; (every new moon and full moon day, the New Year Day, *Deepavali, Dasserah, Sankranti* and the May Day, along with some local festivals, should be considered as holidays). The hours of work for farm servants must be 8 hours a day.
6. Women must get equal wages as received by men.

Our Land Slogan in Manukota Area

What is the basic aim of this land distribution? What is the main reason for our carrying on this campaign? In reply Comrade Liu Shao-chi says: 'But, to change this situation, we have to follow Article 1 of the Land Reforms Draft. We have to introduce the policy of 'land to the tiller', to emancipate the productive forces in the countryside, by abolishing landlordism and feudal exploitation (by land distribution—Regional Coordination Centre,) to pave the way for industrialisation of China. With this basic cause and basic aim, we have to carry on the land reforms'. (From People's China —free translation from Telugu).

Policy of Land Distribution

1. Now, we shall leave alone the small landlords for a temporary period with the object of neutralising them, and distribute the lands of big landlords in the first stage. When we say big landlords, we do not take into consideration the big landlords throughout the taluka as a whole, but we have to see this issue on the basis of village, too. When we have to distribute the land in any village or in any centre, we will have to consider the big section among the local landlords, and distribute their lands. Big landlords mean those who have hundreds or thousands of acres of land, and impose their authority on the people. They also happen to be leaders in the State Congress, agents of the police, leaders of the home guards, etc. After distributing the lands of these, and as and when the people assert their possession on these lands, we shall gradually go on to the lands of the remaining landlord class.
2. While distributing the lands of the landlord, we shall leave him an extent of land equivalent to that of a rich peasant in those villages, and distribute the remaining land, if that particular landlord remains neutral and does not do any harm to the struggle. If the landlords act as enemies we will confiscate all their land.
3. The largest portion of the distributed land should go to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Later to the middle peasants.
4. After leaving a certain portion for common purposes of the village, out of the *poromboke* and *banjarai* lands, the remaining land, too, should be included in the lands for distribution. In forest areas, every villager should be free to cultivate land as *podu* cultivation. From the agricultural labourer up to the rich peasant everyone can cultivate as much as they require. But the extent of land should not exceed the limits of a rich peasant.

Tenancy Lands

Land should be given to those tenants who are in possession of them. But in the case of rich peasant tenants, they can have the land only if they have been in possession of it for a long term. Otherwise, those lands also should be taken over for the common distribution. Long-term tenancy means in general, possession

for a period of 5-6 years or more. Fixation of tenancy must be for a period of three or more years. This yardstick is only for our understanding. In certain cases, there may be exceptions also.

Illegal Occupation

Lands illegally occupied by landlords would be returned to their respective owners. If the lands were illegally occupied by the rich peasants or middle peasants, these should be settled by compromise.

In the whole of Manukota area, as in other areas, the land distribution problem is a two-fold one: 1. Protection of the peasants' rights on the distributed lands; 2. Distribution of new lands. In almost all the villages in the Manukota, and Suryapet areas on the eastern side of the Warangal-Khammam road, land distribution was completed before the 'police action' or immediately after the 'police action'. Here the people hold either a major part of the lands which were distributed among them, either in the shape of tenancy or sharecropping, or purchased by paying a little money. The people are refusing to pay either rent or share in the case of lands once illegally occupied by the landlords. Therefore, in this area, we have to see that the people stand firm on the lands recovered from the landlords earlier. The people should also be mobilised to refuse to pay the rent and share on the remaining lands of the landlords.

The land distribution had taken place to a limited extent in the centres of Metharajupalle, Pindiprolu, Jayyaram, and Venkatayapalem villages of Manukota and Warangal talukas which lie between the Khammam-Warangal railway line and the Khammam-Warangal road. Land has not yet been distributed in the majority of the villages. Therefore, in these villages the problem is one of completing the distribution.

In Forest Areas

We are also facing now the problem of preparing the forest lands for cultivation. The distribution of the land of the landlords under the lake areas of Pakhal, Ramappa, Lakhnavaram, Bayyaram and Gandipeta is still to be taken up. Already *podu* cultivation is going on in the pasture lands of Garla, Pakhal and Gundala. We have to extend this to all the areas.

In the new area, i.e., Manthena, Chennur, et cetera, villages, though there is forest, the landlords hold more lands. Here also the problem of *podu* cultivation is there.

In these areas foodgrains were seized; strong relations have been established with the people and the organisation has been strengthened. The remaining problem is of land distribution. The Party should immediately move to mobilise the people on this issue.

In these areas as well as in the plains areas, there are very big *zamindars* under whom there are 30 to 40 tenants each. Some have 30 to 40 ploughs at

their disposal. The notorious out of them are the Pingali family, Ananda Chakravarty, Tadicharia Papa Rao, Gudem Jagannadha Rao, Kalva Ram Reddy, etc. All the people are waiting for the distribution of the land of these landlords. They are also resisting these exploiters. Therefore, if the Party takes up the distribution of these lands, there will be a big upsurge in Karimnagar and Adilabad districts. And all the villages of the plains areas of this region will come into the orbit of our movement.

Other Revolutionary People's Struggles

We witness that at every turning point and critical situation, it is only through the agricultural labour struggles that a new action begins. Therefore, the Party should concentrate properly on them.

The rich peasant is a class which may join our front, they should also stand by the struggles of agricultural labourers and we should not be satisfied with bringing them in only on general issues.

Seizure Problems: From the beginning there has been an upsurge for seizure of foodgrains, and this action is keeping the movement alive. Our movement starts with this action in the new areas. The struggles of agricultural labourers and the seizure of grains must be developed into land struggles. Otherwise they remain as economic struggles only.

Women's Problem: It should not be forgotten that in all the people's struggles, women are equal partners. Keeping this in view, women also should be mobilised equally along with the men. Struggles must be simultaneously conducted on their special problems such as the right to property, divorce, equality of rights in political, social and economic fields. Women must be mobilised for the cause of preservation of world peace.

Appendix III

Present Secret Organisation - Our Tasks

Circular No. 8 and 10
14.5.1949

We have to come to a thorough understanding about the building-up of a secret organisation, after taking our experience into consideration, as we do in the case of party organisation, political line and military affairs, basing ourselves on self-criticism and experience.

Factors Influencing Secret Methods

Our precautions, secret methods, depend upon the mass movements and the level of their struggles, our relations in the villages; the enemy's strength, their tactics and the nature of repression. Therefore, we have to change our secret organisational methods depending upon the concrete situation.

Let us examine now what the tactics of the enemy are, the nature of the repression, the changes that have taken place and the resultant precautions to be taken by us.

Enemy's Present Plan

1. Enemy camps are installed at short distances, close to one another, and they are coordinating their operations to apprehend our comrades. Wireless apparatus has also been set up in some camps.
2. They are keeping a watch on our routes, particularly the ones taken at nights. They are searching for our comrades minutely, even in the fields. In the Khammam area, they searched the forests taking the assistance of a batch of rich peasants. We could escape only due to the alertness of the sentries.
3. In villages, the CID branch (or paid agents' group) has been strengthened. We need not be surprised at the leakages of our whereabouts to the enemy at a time when the rich peasantry has turned out to be inimical.
   When Pindiprolu comrades sent a boy for cigarettes, the *sahukar* (merchant) extracted information from him about the whereabouts of the squad and leaders, and sent word to the police who rushed to the spot in no time and encircled

our comrades. With great difficulty, our comrades made good their escape. There are similar incidents in large numbers. This shows how the CID and the rich classes are hunting our comrades.

A rich peasant who gave certain articles to one Veerachari leaked out information to the police. There are many incidents where the rich people, while giving shelter or help to our comrades, send information to the police.

4. The enemy is moving very briskly. The moment he gets the information about our whereabouts he encircles us, whether it is day or night, in a desperate manner. Recent enemy concentration in Bayyaram forest, the arrival of the enemy at Bodlada hillocks on knowing of our movements, and the attack on our Khammam comrades at Nagulancha, clearly indicate the swiftness and alertness of the enemy. Not only that. They also made a massive attack on the villagers immediately after the wall-posters were affixed in Pindiprolu area. It means the enemy is actively moving to obstruct every bit of our activities.
5. The enemy is resorting to intensive repression and torture to extract our secrets. Because of this, they are able to secure our secrets and whereabouts easily through weaklings.

The enemy is perpetuating cruelties on the persons who helped us. Bobbala Venkanna, a villager of Kothagudem, was done to death by striking him against a rock, on the charge of giving shelter to D.R. Reddy. Innumerable incidents of this nature have taken place by this time.

And the enemy is bent upon carrying on such cruelties in future also. Their intention is to see that the people do not help us.

The enemy is also resorting to the following methods to find out our secrets. They are of two main categories—one in the forest area and the other in the plains area.

In The Forest Area

The enemy is arresting persons on the basis of suspicion, if they have cropped hair or wear white clothes or smell of soap or coconut oil. They also suspect persons whose pockets contain scraps of paper. The reactionaries among the Koyas and others are trying to extract information about us through their relatives and social contacts. The enemy is also trying to locate our hide-outs through the forest contractors.

They are so keen to detect our bases by observing the bricks used for cooking, utensils, onion and chilli scrap and the leaves on which food is taken.

They keep watch near water springs or ponds.

They are encircling five or more water resources at a time, with a view to catching our comrades in one or the other place.

They go on keeping watch during nights and are also encircling the villages.

In the Plain Areas

The enemy is keeping surveillance near the irrigation wells and cattle sheds. The rich peasants are surreptitiously going to the wells to learn about our movements.

> The rich peasants are entering the houses of the toiling masses under some pretext or other for the same purpose. The enemy is suspecting persons who are purchasing articles needed for our comrades in the forests. Purchase of articles like pencils, carbons and papers if made in excess of ordinary requirements, are looked upon with suspicion. If ordinary persons other than businessmen make such purchases, they are taken into custody on suspicion, and they try to find out our links through them.

If ten or more persons go together for a meeting or for any purpose anywhere, they ore followed by the enemy.

The enemy is visiting the houses of persons whom they suspect to be aiding the comrades in concealed forms, and knocking at their door, saying such and such party leader has come or a squad has come, to know their reactions and to ascertain whether they are giving help to our comrades.

You have to find out through your own experience as to what new tactics are being adopted by the enemy.

People's Cooperation

The exploited masses easily understand the tactics of the enemy. The people are able to understand better than many Party members. Some party members coming from various classes are unable to understand the enemy's plan and activities due to lack of proletarian class-consciousness and outlook.

Today the people are supplying advance information to us about the enemy's movements and tactics. They are cautioning us to be careful. Despite terrific repression they are providing us with food and shelter (inside houses and near the wells). It is so happening that people when coerced to show our hide-outs are somehow avoiding doing so deliberately, either by giving us advance information or misleading the enemy or by making a loud noise giving an indication to us of the enemy's approach.

Sometimes people are apprehensive that our comrades may leak out information about them to the enemy. That is why sometimes they are not forthcoming to help us. But despite that fear, the people are helping us. A mother while giving food to her underground son asked: 'After you take your food, do you reveal the matter to the enemy, surrendering to him, and thus get me beaten and tortured? Never submit or surrender to the enemy. Never get into the hands of the police'. They have full faith in our struggle and party line, but are doubtful of our capacity to function secretly and not expose them, because of many such recent failures on our part. If we can carry on day-to-day activities without exposing them to the enemy, and revive their confidence, they are prepared to

rise to any heights of sacrifice and carry out the tasks required by them. Therefore, our main task and tactic should be to carry on secret activities, counteracting the above enemy tactics, and depending on the level of mass consciousness, the safety and functioning of our squads, arms, party members, couriers, organisers, dumps, centres and routes.

We must review our performance and the mistakes committed so that we may not repeat the same.

Our Lapses

We observe technical precautions as long as our immediate necessities are there, but then we neglect them afterwards.

As long as we are in one place we are careful. Once we shift from that place, we leave everything there itself, articles like bricks, cigarettes, papers, old pots, old clothes and leaves. Kitchen sites and bathing sites and sleeping places remain in such a way as to give a clue to the enemy. Our idea when we leave the place like that is that we may not come back to that place again and as such, there is no harm even if the enemy sees it. Though the enemy may not trace our whereabouts through this, they will be in a position to know what type of places we generally use, and will try to locate and comb out such places. We must also understand that it is very difficult to go on changing places without returning to the first ones. Not only that. Our squad is not only one. There are other squads, too. So if one place is exposed to the enemy, it will endanger the safety of our other squads also. We must understand this defect.

1. While taking shelter, food or any other assistance, our squad members and the organisers are careful, but once the purpose is over, our comrades become less vigilant. Sometimes such contacts are exposed due to recklessness. Thus we are losing so many contacts. As a result, the people are exposed to torture and repression, and are hesitating to give full cooperation. The secret method of functioning is not an individual matter. Everyone we are in contact with, is to be educated and trained in secret methods along with the whole population.
2. Our underground activities are coming to the knowledge of the enemy also, even before the Party centre knows about them in detail. For example, one CID man was killed and the information regarding this was known to the enemy with names also, very soon. In fact, the names of those who participate in such actions should not be known to anyone else except to the actual participants.
3. The existence of a centre is also known to many who are in no way concerned. Consequently, If one person is arrested, we are compelled to vacate that centre, fearing that he may squeal under torture. This is the fate of many of our centres. In some cases, captured persons brought the police to our centres. All the comrades know about the members of our Party and about

our sympathisers, in villages. Everybody is going to their houses, taking food and other assistance. So if anyone surrenders to the enemy, all comrades and sympathisers are exposed and are put to suffering. When comrades come to new centres, they are straightaway taken to the place of important comrades, instead of arranging a meeting at some other place in between.

4. Some comrades are leaking out information after being arrested. This is happening because appropriate responsibilities are not assigned to the comrades depending on their level of consciousness. Because we allot the jobs to anyone available at hand to get it done somehow. By this, the immediate fulfilment of the job is hampered as well as permanent damage done to the organisation itself.
5. We are not observing normal technical precautions.
   - Comrades smoke cigarettes during nights also.
   - Loose-talk and useless chit-chatting. It has become *a* common feature to conduct discussions before anybody and everybody about necessary and unnecessary matters.
   - Relaxation and carelessness while on sentry duty.
   - One comrade does not go ahead as a pilot while walking; comrades are not split into small groups; we are unable to move on without indulging in talk; silence is not maintained; singing goes on.
   - We forget to use tech names.
   - We are just pulling on in the same old fashion as we did in the outmoded Nizam police days, even after the Union armies have entered. Certain comrades are not at all observing tech rules.
6. There is slackness in our tech precautions when enemy concentration becomes less, on the plea that the enemy is not likely to attack at a particular time, or on the plea that the enemy cannot come in a new place.
7. As pointed out by the Provincial Committee, there is a tendency inside the Party that they need not hide anything from the people. With this mentality, it is no wonder that secrets are not maintained between members and members, between one cell and another and between one zone and another. The leadership is overlooking these things, and falling a prey to these defects themselves. These mistakes are committed by ordinary Party members up to area committee members.

Every unit or every member must immediately examine one's practice and pin down what other kinds of technical negligence are being committed.

These mistakes are committed due to lack of class consciousness and forgetting that we have to wage a very prolonged struggle. We are not able to evolve correct underground tactics to suit the prolonged struggle against the Indian bourgeoisie. After the entry of the Indian army into the state, the landlord and the rich peasant classes have joined hands with the enemy in the suppression of our movement. We have to evolve the tactics in such a way that our technical apparatus and

precautions are not just for the time being, but for a prolonged period. It is also true that we have not immediately seen the change in class relations and the classes in our enemy camp after the Indian army entered, and because of this also, we have failed to evolve necessary technical precautions.

Half of the Party in the villages is smashed due to the above mistakes. Important squads, organisers and the leadership are wiped out due to mistakes of the tech.

Not only that. The confidence of the people in our capacity to preserve secrets is somewhat shaken. Therefore, they are hesitant to extend their cooperation. If we organise our underground activities properly, people's resistance will also grow. Otherwise, the people will hesitate. The enemy also will get emboldened that they are able to get our secrets and the records, their self-confidence will increase, and they will intensify their onslaught. So new tactics are to be evolved in view of our experiences.

Provincial Committee Circular

Comrades,

So far you have been accustomed to carrying on your activities openly. You are accustomed to getting full and all-sided cooperation from an overwhelming number of people and the toilers. So you may be surprised if today you are asked, or told, not to reveal the names of party members to anyone else, to conduct cell meetings secretly, that Party organisers must remain secret and may hold meetings only if absolutely essential, or that even squads must exist secretly. We must keep secrets from the enemy but how can we keep secrets from the people? When we are to mix with the people and live with them, how can we keep secrets from the people? You are likely to ask such questions.

Yes. Now a situation has developed when we have got to carry on activities not only without the enemy's knowledge and ken, but even from the general public, except those Party members and members among the public who are directly connected with that particular activity. You all know that even in those early days of our struggle against the Nizam who was completely isolated from every section of the people, due to no practise of secret methods of functioning; how much we had to lose and to suffer. But now with the rich peasant sections, who have very many close economic and social relations with many people in the villages, going over to the enemy camp, they are actively working to suppress our movement; when the enemy after establishing a close network of many military, police and armed camps are combing for our organisers and squads, if we do not observe very strict measures for secret functioning; hundreds of our fighters will be caught and will have to pay with their lives, and this will pave the way for this heroic revolutionary movement to be cruelly annihilated by the enemy.

If every activity we carry on is bound to be known to all the people, it is bound to be known to the rich peasant as well. Once the rich peasant comes

to know of that, he is bound to inform the nearest military camp. You may argue that the only way out of this dilemma is to kill one or two such persons who reveal secrets to the military and then they will not dare anything against us.

It will not be sufficient to kill one or two rich peasants who will be betraying our secrets, because the enemy has established military camps in village after village. This could be, if we could form the people's *raj* and dominate the enemy's military camps from the villages. But now if we want to achieve our objective by this tactic, we may have to kill a very large number of rich peasants, practically the whole class. This is fantastic and is an impossibility. So, in today's conditions, to safeguard our squads and our Party leaders, the main method we have to adopt is one of carrying on our activities secretly and not by wiping out rich peasants. We must develop methods of secret functioning and prevent the news reaching the enemy. But in this effort, if a few individuals become professional and paid agents of the enemy, to transmit our news to the enemy such persons must be eliminated; That is why we must adopt the principle in all our activities and in building the necessary technical apparatus and precautions, that every activity will be carried on in secrecy and will be known only to those Party members and members of the public who are directly connected with carrying out such an activity, and no one else, either of the public or Party member, will get to know of it. As our movement develops further, when we can isolate the rich peasants completely and as we win over the middle peasants more and more, then we may resort to more and more open functioning and carrying on of open Party activities. But now all our activities must be strictly on the basis of secrecy and some of the suggestions given below:

For Organisers

1. Every organiser must keep one trusted permanent courier. If we go on appointing each and everyone as courier, we may not be able to retain secrets.
2. If the meeting of the villagers is necessary, it can be done after sentries and guards have been posted around the village. Immediately after the meeting, the organiser and the squad shall move away from that village to some other distant village which will not be known to anyone from this village. Village meetings can be conducted with the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants. It is better not to allow rich peasants and landlords in these meetings. At least persons who are suspected of transmitting information to the enemies must not be allowed to participate in the meetings.

   Do not stay in the villages in the daytime. The reason is that the police collects all the villagers in one place, in this case the organiser can be easily identified by the enemy. It is also difficult to escape when caught up, as there are no crops in the fields. So it is better to stay outside the villages and mingle with the local people by wearing the type of clothes that they wear. Villagers also should not know about us. When the enemy attacks, you should not flee while within rifle range because by this action the enemy will understand that you are an important comrade.

3. It is no more possible for the organisers themselves to personally solve the people's problems. They must get these done after discussion with the cells and party committees. So the old methods of the organiser rushing to a village and meeting the people and giving decisions or the villagers flocking near the organiser whether in his shelter or in fields, et cetera, and narrating their difficulties and seeking solutions should be given up.
4. Our organisers are writing their full names and the addresses on the reports they are sending to higher committees. They are also indiscriminately mentioning the names of villages and of persons in such a way. If these reports fall into the hands of the enemy, all the secrets will be out. So reports and correspondence must be in assumed names. The names of the villages used for special purposes should never be written. Different names can be given to these villages. If we adopt this procedure, we can to a certain extent save the people from the intense police torture.
5. Some of our organisers who come from families of landlord and other exploiting classes, are getting arrested when they go to visit their families. Our comrades are not in a position to understand that their in-laws, parents and brothers will no more love them in the old way, as we start struggles for the elimination of the exploiting system and classes. Our comrades must treat them as our class enemies. Our comrades can meet their wives and children with due care only when the latter severs connections with the rest of their families. If the wife and children are not prepared to sever connections with the rest of the family, then there is no other go except to cut off connections with them also. We should not also maintain any relations with them for the sake of securing money, clothes and other facilities. So long as we cannot do this, the toiling masses can never repose confidence in the Party. They apprehend that Party members coming from exploiting classes may surrender to their families at any moment. It must be recognised that comrades can remain inside the Party only when they sever connections with the alien classes and get rid of the remnants of their class origin.
6. Precautions to the taken while travelling or moving out:
   - Never go alone. A courier must be taken along.
   - Journeys must be undertaken during night-time as far as possible (unless it is a forest where nobody moves about).
   - Decide the route in advance and gather information prior to the journey, whether the enemy has laid any trap, etc.
   - In case there is no separate scouting, the courier must go in front and the organiser should follow.
   - Never divulge information to anyone in the village from where one starts, about the direction and destination. In case it is necessary to leave information, then the cell secretary or any other important comrade may be informed.
   - You should not give any information about your place or your address,

to the persons whom you have asked to meet you. Instead, ask them to come to the nearest contact place and make arrangements to give intimation to you.

- Never enter the village directly. Stay at a far-away place and send your courier in advance to find out the conditions there, and to bring to you the persons with whom we have contact or any other Party member in the village.

7. Precautions during one's stay in Villages:
   - Hold village Party cell meetings at secret places outside the village. Public meetings can be conducted in the village only when the enemy is not present in the village, even then the village must be guarded. When the enemy is in the villages, only small group meetings can be conducted outside the village.
   - Never stay in the villages. The only exception is at the time of village meetings.
   - When food and other requirements have to be brought outside the village, this should not be known to many persons, as is happening at present. Only the village cell secretary and the person who brings the food may know about it.
   - Nobody, except you and your courier, should know the place where you sleep outside the village at night.

The place where you sit or stay in the daytime should be the fields and farms of our strong sympathisers and there should not be any fields or farms of rich landlords around it. It is better if people do not come frequently to that place.

- Do not stay at the same place outside the village every time you go to any particular village. You must invariably change the place if it has been exposed after your last trip.
- Do not allow anybody to know about how or where protection is arranged for you, against rain, etc. That should be used only when it rains.

8. Couriers and Communications:
   - If the courier does not return by the pre-arranged time, you must take the necessary steps, presuming that there is a possibility of his involvement in trouble or danger. There is no harm in this step, even if no danger has occurred to the courier.
   - When couriers are sent either to the higher committee or to other organisers, send them to the specified place only. Do not send the couriers directly to them, even though you know their places.
   - Similarly, give intimation about sending your letters to a specified address. You must also make arrangements to see that all letters coming from the centre reach you.

- Keep only necessary papers and things with you. Papers and articles which are not immediately needed can be preserved at a special, trusted place. This place should not be known to others except to the comrade who preserves it for you and to another important comrade.
- Do not send each and every person that is available, on any assignment. You must only send your courier or any important comrade from the village. You must always send the same person information while sending to the higher committee.
- Neither you nor your courier should reveal to anybody else the contact places which are known to you.
- You must warn anyone who talks very carelessly about secret places.

9. Always keep Rs. 100 (hundred rupees) with you. Excess amounts should be sent to the higher committee.
   - Always keep with youself some weapon for self-defence. If nothing else is there, you should have at least a good knife.
   - Keep track of the movements of the enemy. Keep an eye on beggars, traders and strangers coming into the village.
10. You must mix with the people and you should not be distinguishable from the other people in dress, language and accent.

Secrecy

You may not be surprised when we say that our organisers should carry on underground activities. But you will naturally be surprised when we say that the names of the Party members should not be revealed and cell meetings should be conducted in secrecy. You will also question as to how it is possible to keep the names of the Party members secret. When the enemy picks up the members and tortures them separately, we will understand the significance of this necessity. There is a way out of this.

Except the prominent persons, others need not reveal that they are members of the Party. Villages where 75 per cent of the population belongs to our Party, there will be a large number of youth who will come forward to carry out our Party activities. In such a case, the enemy thinks that they are all members of the Party. They also believe that whoever scolds them the most or makes the most uproar is a member of the Party. So it is not possible for the enemy to know from among the mass, who specifically are the members of the Party and who are not. When the enemy takes away a good number of people, there may also be, by chance, some Party members amongst them. But there may not be any occasion for all the Party members to be arrested at a time. Accordingly, we can save the new Party members from being exposed. We can now see the intensity of the dangers due to the exposure of our Party members and squad members. We should hold our cell meetings and committee meetings secretly and the place of meetings should not be known to others.

Channel of Communication

At present there is no systematic communication process between one area committee and another, between one and another zone in an area, and between the centre organiser and the zonal committee. Whenever there is the necessity, anybody available nearby is deputed for this purpose and that comrade goes on enquiring about the organiser and area members or office bearers in the village until he traces them out and hands over the message. But this process is helping the enemy to know the location of the organisers. This cannot be continued anymore.

There must be a well regulated communication system. Special couriers must be trained for this purpose. Specific places must be selected for handing over letters. On the appointed day, the courier should hand over the letters, leaflets and other articles intended for other committees, and collect the *dak* and articles sent from other centres. The comrades assigned for this job must be coached to preserve secrecy. Others should not know that he is working as a courier. The comrade assigned for this job must behave normally and move just like an ordinary traveller in the local dress.

Since the safety of the organisers, squads and Party organisation is in the hands of these comrades, we must go into their antecedents. They must be men of cool determination but look unostentatious and quite normal. They should be such comrades as can be relied on, not to reveal secrets to the enemy even when they are tortured.

Even though we choose reliable comrades for this purpose, yet if the messenger does not return at the specified time, immediate precautions must be taken.

We must keep the names of the new centre organisers and the Party members recruited into sabotage squads completely secret. They should not be known to others.

In the case of new organisers and cadres, they should carry on the work while being in some business or profession.

In the case of Party members and squad members in the villages they continue the Party work while attending to their normal duties in their respective professions. Their work must be a secret.

Never keep the names of the Party members, village squad members, village committee members, in writing. At the most, the names of the cell secretary, village committee members, sabotage squad commander, centre commander, president and secretary of the village Andhra Mahasabha Committee may be noted on paper with assumed names (or with the first and last letters of the name), and a copy should be kept at the zonal centre. It is the responsibility of the zonal centre comrade to see that the names are not divulged. If any leakage occurs, the responsibility must be borne by him alone.

One such list may also be sent to the area committee. The area committee will also take similar responsibility.

The centre organiser should not send the names in writing to the zonal centre. They can give the names when they meet. Special care should be taken when such names are sent from the zonal centre to the area centre. Full names of the villages should not be written. The first and last letters are enough. Or some other code may be adopted.

Our propaganda meetings and other activities must be conducted during nights, as far as possible. We must understand that only the 12 hours of night are meant for us. We must convert night into day and day into night, in our activities.

If any CID person or policeman is killed, others should not know who killed them. Information as to which squad carried out the operation should not be revealed. It is enough to know that the operation was done under the leadership of the Party. But a detailed report must be sent to the higher committee.

Military reports must be written separately. Similarly, details regarding Party organisation and underground activities must be written in a special report. Pseudonyms are to be used in reporting.

A separate report must be sent covering the police raids, the people's movement, people's problems and village committee affairs. Never keep any important record with youself. It must be dumped immediately in a safe place.

Instructions for Couriers

You must mingle with the people of the areas in which you move about. There should not be any variance between you and the local people in the mode of dressing, accent and language. You must wear clothes similar to those of the local people. If necessary, change the style of your hair-cut. If necessary, remove your shirt also.

You must be prepared with answers beforehand to reply to queries regarding the village you are proceeding towards, the village you belong to, et cetera; in the course of your journey.

When confronted by any people or strangers, behave normally. You should not get confused or frightened as if others know you beforehand. You must answer naturally and steadily.

On your way keep a watch in front and behind also, but it must look natural.

While walking, one courier must move in front, a little distance ahead, and the important articles and letters must be kept with the courier behind.

If you suspect that some CID person is following, change your route and show that you are going in some other direction. If he still follows, sit down as if you are taking rest, and observe his movements and behaviour. When it is confirmed that he from CID, shake him off or finish him off if the necessity and opportunity are there.

Journeys must be undertaken during the nights, as far as possible.

Never reveal the place you have been to or about the person you met or the location of a person.

You must go to the very place as directed; and not to any other place, even though you come to know that the wanted persons are available there.

You must carefully protect the letters, papers and other articles which you are taking. If the enemy follows you, destroy the important letters. If there is no such scope, swallow them. Goods (*saaman*) should not be taken in modern or hand jute bags, but must be tied up in a cloth bundle, which is the normal way the peasants carry their goods on a journey.

You must talk only about ordinary things with strangers but not politics, nor lecture politics.

The more innocent you look, the better you can discharge your duties.

If you are captured by the enemy all of a sudden, you must escape by giving on appropriate story (For example, I am going to the house of my relative, or for purchasing sheep).

If they start torturing you, do not reveal any secret. Only reply that you don't know anything.

During your rest period, try to imbibe politics. Illiterate comrades must learn to read and write.

Couriers should not interfere with any other matter except the matters related to them. They should not make any effort to know matters that do not concern them.

The couriers must have a stick. If there is a battery-light, it should be used sparingly. Battery-lights should not be used wherever people are not in the habit of using them, or where people can see the light. And when you come near the village you should not use it at all.

You must learn how to treat snake-bite and scorpion sting by first-aid method. Always keep one blade and a match box with you. And keep other ordinary medicines with you.

Comrades,

Today, the role of the couriers is very important in our Party organisation. If these comrades act silently, tactfully and promptly, our Party will go ahead immensely. Our Party activities depend upon these comrades. Therefore, there is so much responsibility upon these courier comrades. If they are complacent or negligent to any extent, our Party will receive a serious set-back. So these comrades, realising their responsibilities, should discharge their duties carefully.

Instructions for the Squads

Our squads should function in complete secrecy. We have seen that we can carry on prolonged struggle only if we do that. We are giving the following instructions for our secret organisation:

1. Stay of the Squad

A squad remains always in secret. If it wants to go to a village, it should send

its scout first to find out the conditions in that village. Even after it reaches the village, it should stay away from the village in a safe place. Its arrival should not be known to others, except one or two important persons of the village. It should procure all its requirements secretly, through those one or two important persons only, without any hectic activity.

Whatever may be the number in the squad, one out of them must be posted as a sentry. He should not stand either at on elevated position or by the side of a path, as in the past. He must select such a place that he should not be seen by others, but at the some time, be in a position to see others.

One or two important comrades from the village must be instructed to be vigilant. Yet you should never stop posting a sentry, and should depend upon them alone.

Under no circumstances, should you wear uniforms in the day-time.

If you happen to smoke *beedies* and cigarettes, you must see that the cigarette ends are destroyed beyond visibility or are covered under leaves and earth. So also, after taking your food, you must see that there are no signs of the leaves (or papers) in which you have taken your food (*vistharaakulu*), etc.

You must make arrangements even in the forests to protect yourselves from the rains. Nobody should know about these arrangements.

2. Squad Journey

You must know in advance the details about the journey to be undertaken. At the time of your journey, the scouts must guide you. The squad should follow at a certain distance.

You must travel on other routes, leaving out the routes on which the enemy may way-lay you.

Travel during night-time only.

Keep your weapons ready throughout the journey.

3. Contacting other Units

Each squad should make arrangements to get its *dak* to a particular place (contact place). It should make some arrangement to get the letter from that place every week. But, couriers should not go in search of the squad.

The courier coming from the squad must also go to the pre-appointed place and hand over the letters.

Squad members should not go straight to their homes. They must stay outside the village or stay in the forest area and meet their families there only. In case there is enemy vigilance in that village, and local enemies are there, they should call their family to another village to meet them, but they should not meet them in their own villages.

Prepare the People for Defending the Party and Squads

Sometimes we have to adopt underground methods while mobilising the people

in the struggles. For example, when we are about to cut the roads, we should not reveal the plan beforehand to all. Information as to how many persons came from which village should not be revealed to others. People should be formed into groups and the work should be carried on without mixing them up. In the same way, while we seize the foodgrains also, groups must be formed and distribution channelised accordingly. Paddy should not be allowed to go into the hands of the enemy again. It must be kept in a secret dump. Grains should not fall on the way. Axes, spades and sickles must be carefully placed. They need not be given to others. After your work is over, keep them carefully. When there is work, take them out and once the job is over, keep them back in their places. The enemy should not be allowed to know about the seizure beforehand. Rich peasants also should be kept away. The operations must be carried out in an organised manner.

Develop the consciousness of the people to defend the Party. We must propagate among the people to defend the Party, with supreme sacrifice if necessary. We must create consciousness among the Party members to safeguard and protect the important Party leadership, It must be explained to the members that in case the enemy attacks, they must be prepared to undergo any sacrifice and safeguard their leadership. That is why the P.C. made it clear that the area committee members and important leadership should not take part in the actions. It is also made clear that the zonal leadership should not normally participate in actions except in emergencies. Important leaders should not be posted as sentries. As the sentry is meant to detect the movement of the enemy, he will be the first target of the enemy's bullet. That means any important leader at the sentry's post will be finished at the first shot. If that is so, what is the sentry for? Though the sentry is meant for the entire squad, safety of the leadership is also an important factor. So, the question arises, who is an important comrade?

Important leadership means the important comrades among the squads camping there. The others should take care of and protect them.

We must see that our tech secrets are not spelled out in our leaflets, circulars, wall posters and slogans.

If any new comrade comes, only the person concerned should meet him. Other members should not ask or try to know the name of the village to which he belongs. If anybody asks such questions, the new comrade should not reveal his village, name or the purpose for which he went there.

Except the secret reports and records necessary for reference, other records relating to the day-to-day activities may be destroyed. Secret tech circulars, other secret guerrilla tactics and our new tactics and other papers, harmful if they fall into the hands of the enemy, should not be kept in handbags or should not be placed with irresponsible comrades. They must be kept with responsible comrades and the contents be read over to other comrades. After reading, they may be either preserved carefully or destroyed.

If a new comrade or courier or any other person on a specific assignment

goes to another person, he must be called out and talked to. They should not talk before others. The new comrade also should not go on talking before all in haste. They must retire to some other place.

If it is a small matter to be taken up with any other comrade, it can be done through a letter or a courier. For every trivial matter, there should not be a meeting. A meeting be arranged only if it is inevitable.

Technical Circular—Second Part

1. Shelter Places

a. The lesser the number at a place, the safer and more secret it can be kept. It is in accordance with this principle that it was decided that it is not correct for organisers to go along with squads. Now-a-days, the armed squad is not the main safeguard. Maintaining secrecy is the main safeguard for an organiser. So except for one or two reliable couriers, no one else should remain with the organiser.

b. When one is taking shelter outside the villages, near the wells, in the fields, he must see that neighbouring well-owners and, the owners of the fields are our sympathisers. The well-owner where we are taking shelter, should make arrangements to get news of the enemy and his movements from the neighbours, from time to time, and make the necessary safeguards.

c. The comrade on guard duty must wear the same dress or clothes as the peasants in these fields, and must look as if he is busy working in those fields, while all the time carrying on his guard duty.

d. Small hillocks and rock heaps can also be used for taking shelter. But when food and water are brought, extra precautions are necessary. Because when you take food and water to places where normally people do not go, it arouses suspicions.

e. The organisers and couriers must wear dress and adopt manners such as to make them completely alike the people. The way he cuts his hair (whether completely shaved or short or with different varieties of hair-cuts) must be similar to that of the people in that locality. The shirts should be of coarse cloth and cut like *banians* or short-shirts, as the peasants in these localities wear. The *dhoties* must be brownish, with a water-soaked tinge as those of peasants. One must not wear a watch on the wrist. (You may keep it in the shirt-pocket so that none can notice it). Fountain pens should not be kept in the pocket as can be seen by others. Moustaches have to be kept or grown as the peasants do. They cannot be trimmed in modern fashion nor properly shaved.

We must not use washing soap nor should clothes smell of soap, because the enemy examines the smell of the clothes of suspected persons. It is better to have a turban of cloth as headgear normally.

f. The shelter places should not be near communications or often-frequented routes of the enemy. They should not be such places, since in case of emergency, one is restricted to a very narrow area and is confronted with the enemy when he approaches. They must be such that even if the enemy suddenly approaches, we have ways of taking protection and can escape his encirclement or grip. It means the places of shelters must be such, like cracks, hillocks or trees, ditches, marshy fields, or lakes or any kind of obstacles that can delay the enemy before he can actually pounce on the shelter; we have plenty of experience in choosing such places.

g. We must not go about carrying leather or modern bags, but tie our things in a cloth bundle and keep them or carry them with us.

2. Regarding Food

a. It is difficult to get food to our places of shelter during daytime. On certain rare occasions it may be possible, but it is not always safe to get it. It is very easy to get food brought to our places of shelter during nights or after it becomes dark. When we get meals, it must at the same time be enough to keep something for the next morning, and it can be of a preservable variety. If we cannot get such food, we must get fried *dal* or *chana* (Bengal gram) or other preservable eatables and keep it as a reserve. Similarly, we must get sufficient water stored in pots or jars or leather water bags for the whole of the next day.

b. We must not get meals directly to our places of shelter. Whenever they are brought, we must examine, or be on guard to see whether anyone is watching, or comes to know of it. We must get meals only secretly without the knowledge of anyone else.

c. We must not send for cigarettes anybody who happens to be nearby, or at any time we feel the need for them. This must be strictly observed. Cigarettes must be obtained through other smokers who are sympathetic to us, all the necessary quantity at a time. It is prohibited to smoke cigarettes at night.

3. While Sleeping

a. The place we retire to for nights must not be at or near the road or communication routes of the enemy. All around there must be safety. Even if the enemy happens to pass within 15-20 yards, the place must be such as not to be visible to the enemy. We can sleep on rocks, on hillocks, in cracks or in dried up ditches, or in the midst of tree clusters.

b. We must not cover ourselves with white *chaddar* (blankets) or towels. Cover with some coloured cloth.

c. We must not sleep till it becomes bright day-light. Because if the enemy happens to locate us it becomes very easy for the enemy to capture the sleeping targets. If we are awake early, we can locate the enemy ourselves easily and escape in the dusk.

d. Before it is day-break, we must complete all our morning ablutions.

e. We must not snore. If we have to cough, place a piece of cloth on the mouth and smother the noise.

f. The places where we sleep, even if they are cleaned before we go to bed, when we get up, remove every sign that would reveal to the enemy that somebody had slept the night there.

4. **Travelling from place to place**

a. During daytime, under no circumstances travel by the main routes. Travel through cross-country paths or routes especially reconnoitered and selected beforehand by us. Even these routes are to be used with new couriers who are not known locally. Exposed couriers or organisers should not travel during daytime. They should not travel even at night through main routes, but use special cross-country routes.

b. When organisers or two couriers are going, one person must walk in front at a visible distance from the second person following him. They must watch out for any sound or sign all around as they march on. If any suspicion arises, they must not look surprised. They must at once slip out of the main route, and confirm about the suspicion aroused, and then only should they move forward. This applies to squads as well.

c. We must not carry so much load that it prevents us from taking to double-march or going at a run, if the occasion demands. Important letters or records should be kept in the pockets or hands, and not in heavy bundles, so as to be in a position to destroy them easily in case of necessity.

d. While marching, do not talk; use silent signals or dumb signals if one has to communicate something to another.

General Tech Precuations

1. When we order certain supplies, never expose those supplying things to us. We must give the contacts with these suppliers to reliable couriers. We must not send anybody who is at hand.
2. We must not use scented oils.
3. We must not go home for festivals, nor celebrate festivals or festive occasions in the places where we are taking shelter, beyond the possibilities that exist there.
4. We must not talk loudly.
5. We must not call aloud - 'Comrade'.
6. Except on rare or special occasions, never greet another with 'Red Salute' with the clenched fist.
7. When its raining, especially during the rainy season, do not visit or sleep in cattle sheds, thinking that the enemy will not come there in the rains. We must use mats made of *jammu* (grass or reeds. These are rain-proof) or take shelter under a thick cluster of trees. Do not be negligent about the enemy during the rainy season.

Secret Methods in the Forests

1. Do not walk through the main routes. We must find out special routes. Do not talk while on these routes.
2. Do not make a noise in the forests. Singing songs, laughing loudly, and calling a comrade at a distance by shouting, are to be avoided.
3. In the villages, when we go to fetch food, do no stay there for long periods, either on the plea that it is not yet dark (on the ground that night has not yet advanced and people are still moving about). We must go to villages and plan our stay depending on the nature of the contacts we have, but do not stay too long in any village.
4. Where we stay, do not make a noise. Brass pots must be used carefully so as not to make a noise. See that the signs of cooking are not left, such as stones arranged to serve as cooking stones *(poyyalu),* nor the scrapings of onions, chillies, paper or cloth remnants. The whole place should be cleaned and should be covered with ordinary forest leaves, et cetera, so as to give the original normal appearance.

   We must also see that from our forest shelters, no paths are formed to the main routes, by our constant use of them.
5. We must not shoot or practise with our guns, within two miles of our shelters, either to hunt for food or for any other purpose, except in self-defence against the enemy.
6. Where we take shelter, we must not dump things. And we must not live where things are dumped. Except for foodstuffs and other requisites, enough to last for 4 or 5 days, the rest of the stores should be dumped at least beyond one mile distance from the place where we stay.
7. Sentries must be kept at a distance of one furlong or 200 metres. They must not stay on hilltops or tree tops, as to be visible or seen by others.
8. In the forests, just like the animals live without being seen by men. Similarly, we must live without the enemy espying us. We must live in ditches, in depressions, unseen by others.
9. When we go to fetch water, we must first observe from a distance, whether the enemy is nearby the water source, and after assuring ourselves that there is no enemy or danger, then only go near water to get it. This problem will not be so acute during the rainy season.
10. When we are on the march, led by the scout the comrades must march in small batches; each batch must keep itself only at a visible distance from the batch in front.
11. We must not allow our shelters to be known even to the tribal people, living in dense forests. We must reach the villages of Koya people from a different direction not directory our place. The same precaution must be observed when we leave their villages for our places.
12. We must put up huts for living in the forests, but not carelessly, at any

and every place. They must not be near the routes or near the villages. In the huts we must not stay all the 24 hours. Except when it is raining (very heavily) we must normally live under trees or clusters of trees (as it would give us greater mobility for quick action).

13. During the rains, the enemy raids are usually on the routes and on the villages. So we must be extra careful at these places, during that season.
14. The couriers must not move with clothes freshly washed with soap and smelling of soap.
15. For bathing purposes, all must go at a fixed pre-determined time and not at random, whenever one likes. The sentry must be on guard while others complete their baths as quickly as possible, and without making a noise.

Comrades,

You must, while observing the above suggestions of ours, from your own experience locally, develop other necessary tech rules and practices. Nowadays, we must be able to carry on secret activities continuously in a more organised and more effective way, facing whatever repression the enemy may let loose. This is absolutely essential for carrying on our party activities. To the extent we fail to observe the rules of secret methods of functioning, the it becomes harmful for our movement. If we can develop secret methods of functioning to organise the present upsurge of the people, then within a few days we can undoubtedly develop the whole movement to a far higher level. So we request you, comrades, to observe these technical and practical suggestions for secret functioning.

With revolutionary greetings,

14.5.1949 Party Area Committee.

Appendix IV

Tales of Telangana

(Given below is a poem, Tales of Telangana, written by Harindranath Chattopadhyay, at the time of the Telangana armed struggle).

Now let me write it down,
A tale of Telangana, a harrowing tale
Yet brimmed with hope wrought of grim sacrifice;
A tale of murdered innocents, raped honour,
Broken masses bleeding under the stress
Of the last struggle, one with the bitter struggle
Of lingering colonies that will not brook
Longer continuance of fascist greeds,
Imperialist grabs with callous guns for mouths
And hireling bombs spreading incessant menace.
You've heard of Telangana, have you not?
The world has heard and wondered
It is another name for history
Revised, historic values re-arranged,
Re-shuffled. It is echoed and re-echoed
Through the dark corridors of future time
Through which historic logic treads towards
Its grand fulfilment.

Little village town
Of Achchampet linked with little towns
All over Telangana ! not alone
You wage the final battle. You are conscious
Of sister village towns in Korea,
Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam.
Burma...
Even as the heart throbs in a hero's body,
The blood burns in a martyr's arteries,

The even breath blows through a fighter's nostrils,
So you, O simple village town !
Throb, burn, blow in and through the history
Of mighty Telangana, destined base,
Parent of countless bases yet to be,
Unconquerable bases that shall free
Our land from so-called freedom; shall release
Our country from the Commonwealth composed
Of thrice uncommon brigands
Pooling the common wealth of credulous nations,
Master marauders, deaths in human form,
Exploiting life and bulging on the dead !

Write down the name, my reader ! Achchampet !
The soil is black
In the sad fields where men were weighted down
Once under Deshmukhs and their heavy yoke,
Under the stinging stroke
Of hireling whips that made their bodies crack;
Weary and brown
  Bodies of peasantry whose labours yield
Harvests, whose sweat to every inch of field
Means more than rain, whose sinews are at one
With growing blades of corn, whose muscles move
With uncomplaining labour, to hot suns,
Whose feet and hands are chapped and crocked and creviced
Like earth-cakes, summer-scorched...

These peasants once
Believed in fate, being drugged for centuries
By such philosophies as made them bend
Even as wheat under the shaving sickle;
Mind-shackled to enslavement with the sense
Of resignation, year in and year out,
With hardly strength to even so much as sigh,
Blood-sapped, withal, without the strength to die.
To them the sun was once a scarlet wound,
The moon, pus-oozing sore, the midnight stars
Nocturnal imitation of the sweat
Trickling diurnally a-down their backs;
Each sun that set, a milestone nearer death

Promising their lives release; hard knuckles, veins
Dwelt in the neighbourhood of scythes and sickles
Hired from the landlord whose least look would cut
Surer than scythe and sharper than any sickle;
Their backs were ever ready for the whip
Inescapable as lightning stroke
Striking a sun-burnt rock. But now, that's over!

They have arisen from death-heavy torpor,
Awakened to a sudden realisation
Of their own humanhood ! they know they are men,
They know they are urgent in a country's plan,
They know they are the mainstay of the soil,
They know they have a right, because they toil,
They produce land, fresh air and happiness;
They know how idlers lived upon their labour,
Blood-suckers on their blood;
They know how begone time had rifled them,
Drained up their life-blood, sapped them to their bone;
They know how old philosophies have tricked
Their minds into subservience, and they know
Their future shall have no truck with their past,
And they shall make the landlord know they know,
And they will make exploiters know they know,
And through this knowledge everything seems changed,
The fields themselves already feel unchained,
The womb of earth, heavy with future grain,
Whispers! My travail shall produce for those
Who have defied them, flogged them, broken them
In years gone by...

And do the peasantry
Lack courage? ask the Deshmukh, trembling rat,
Hiding behind the guns of Government,
Fire-arms, hot tyrannies of terrorist rule
Now in our midst, whose symbol is the flag
Of cunning freedom meant for fat corruption,
The flag that covers up two other flags!
The lingering Union Jack so loathe to bid
Goodbye to colonies, the Stars and Stripes
Flag of the young imperialist USA,

Licking the world's air like a tiger's tongue
Thirsty for blood, the blood of Asia,
The blood of Europe and the blood of Africa;
Does not our Government know? fool to believe
It does not know. It knows and is relieved
This Government that, in the name of the people,
Rides on the back of the people, flouts their will
To imperialist winds which, blowing over our land,
Redden the palsied cheeks of men who govern,
A diseased red
They fondly name the red of waxing health
Regime of terrorists hand-in-glove with fascists
Wherever they exist, family of knaves,
Inflated eunuchs momently dependent
Upon the potency of tanks and guns
War-weapons of destruction built to break
The very hands that blindly build and add
To the tall brag of top-dogs. Several guns
That have already blown out peasants, brains
Are British guns, I take it...British guns
Enemy guns became the guns of friends!
All this the people know; they have arisen.

Do they lack courage? ask the Deshmukh, ask
The bloated landlord, ask his well-fed stooges,
His belching right-hand butchers,
And they will tell you, if they do not lie.
They dare not lie, their hearts are in their mouths,
They'll tell you how the sudden hands of the people
Are ripping up their masks, revealing them
As they have always been, cowards and traitors.
Quivering rots, with little triangle mouths,
And tremulous whiskers, staring eyes of dread
Anticipating final nemesis;
They know that Revolution's claws are sharp
And certain that, when revolution comes
It comes without announcement with a pause
Fatal to any rat!
You government
Of brutal tyranny, of tinsel crowns,
Self-puffed exploiters, seeming benefactors,

You arms-empowered heroes, one-day actors,
Time's bloody bubbles that shall burst—and soon.
Pricked by the pointed and united will
Of Telangana heroes, real heroes,
Conscious of brotherhood with other heroes,
Their brother heroes risen in Andhra Desa,
In Malabar, in Tamilnad, in Bengal,
Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra,
Punjab and Kashmir: brothers everywhere
Who rise against injustice and oppression
Determined to restore integrity
And meaning to the nation.

The people are a flood and throws up heroes
Even as billows sweeping
From end to end of reddening horizons.
Weapons of steel were not more adamant
Instant and triumph-concluding than the weapon
United masses wield: one single weapon,
Their single hunger, irrespective
Of creed and colour, leading to one will
Spelling a certain triumph,
Once won, forever won;
(unlike the slippery triumph of the tyrant)
Earth-rooted. Look. Their heads are crowned with heaven
More sure than death, more wonderful than life
Of which they are creators.
Down with the bastard landlord, down with knaves
Licking his filthy feet, sharing his feasts,
His bloodstained orgies.

What has the landlord done? What has he not?
The cobble-stones of village roads will tell you
Stories to make you shudder; every wall
Of every peasant hut will tell you things
To make your blood leap up to boiling point,
Each tree along the village path will tell you
Of rape committed on young village girls with
Mouth-bandaged, virgin, raw-fleshed, dumbed dread;
The village well will tell you and each pitcher
Dipped in its waters, how the landlord swoops
On human flesh, whether of men or women,

With hot invisible talons, casting
Across the fields his withering vulture-shadow.

What has the landlord done? Unseal your ears
And listen, listen if you have the courage:
He forced the peasant's thumb impression,
Illiterate stain, on fraudulent documents,
Enslaving him thereafter, encircling him
With life-long menace of soul-strangling debts,
Commitments; imaginary mortgages,
Held valid in a court of law by judges
Betraying justice in the name of justice
Until the peasant's oxen, plough and cart,
Field-implements, his very pots and pans
And he himself, his women and his all
Becomes the landlord's private property
For him to use at will, or, should he choose,
To auction or exchange for lousy profit.
Yea, he has robbed the peasant of his grain
His woman of her honour,
His infant's mouth of the occasional morsel.

In this he is supported
By uniformed and scarlet-turbanned pigeon-stools,
The Government's armed police, automatons
Of law and order, sadistic machines
Manoeuvring multi-method punishment,
Cog within cog, wheel whirling wheel
Of machination, rank and soul barterers
For a mere mess of pottage and that mess
Unworthy of the belly being stained
With their own brothers' blood, thrice deftly mixed
With the hashed entrails and the minced-up hearts
Of daring peasants, from among whose kind
These treacherous men were drawn and trained and bribed
To murder and humiliate their own kind.
These be the traitors: yet, even among them
A few rebel against such law and order
As aim a blow at brothers: such are shot
Along with those whom they refuse to shoot.
By others, hardened criminals, who shoot them.

The people, giant darers, such
As fill the eyes of stars with grateful thanks,
The scarlet bosom of the sun with grace,
Assuring life of rich continuance,
Assuring beauty of continuance,
Assuring justice of continuance,
Assuring victory of victory
Based on the ultimate defeat of liars,
Of stooges, hooligans, hireling half-beasts
Mouth-frothed with blood-stained foam fringing the sea,
The rolling sea of multitudes grown one
Immense, inevitable undulation;
And of that sea the peasantry are waves
Drunk with the glory of new-rising suns,
Jubilant under new-rising moons,
Clapping their hands to infinite paces, shouting:
The world is ours, is ours...we are the world.

Gas-bellied propaganda
Floats everywhere
Like the ballroom and through the darkening air
Of tyrants' fast accumulating doom
Attracts the public herd, especially
The intellectuals, sitters on the fence,
The bird-beast bats, symbol of uncertain choice,
Smug chess players of arm-chair politics,
Vendors of honest thinking in the markets
Of veering opportunisms, manoeuvred
Slyly by crooked political foxes.
Propaganda, rot of rubbish bins
Newspapers, pamphlets, sloppy slogan sheets
Struck by the hundred thousand
To feed the credulous public on pigmeal slander,
Corrupt the blood until it may not flow
Freely from heart to brain, from brain to heart,
Until nor brain is left nor heart is left,
Clog nerve and vein, intrigue each artery
To acquiescence, hollowing out each bone
Through which cheek-swollen, propaganda breathes
Orgiastic jazz of bourgeois hatred,
Of capitalistic acrimony,

Spasmodic blasts making the credulous sway
Turning unconscious enemies of the people.

But not the people shall be swayed
Who toil and sweat and drudge and know
The agony of dying without being dead,
The masterly decision they shall not die.

Not propaganda's colourful balloon
Allured their vision which, unlike the vision
Of fools who hardly see beyond their nose,
Results from keen starvation in whose eyes
There lurks the sudden glitter of a sword,
A blinding edge-gleam cutting sheer through slander,
Slicing the core of falsehood at a stroke.

Revolution is not something sudden,
It is a vast invulnerable volcano
Asleep through periods in human time,
Unpublished, unsuspected
It simmers, smokes, boils, fire-gathering inside
Its vacant belly belching biliously
Under a throat of crater, under the waistline;
Deep down below it gathers momentum
Starting at the invisible hoary base
Of elemental energy...

Yea, such is revolution, and the people
Flesh-crinkled, solid, low-lying in dark dumbness
To all appearance, innocuous, extinct,
Are history's volcano
Unpublished, unsuspected,
Simmering, smoking, boiling, fire-gathering inside,
Their vacant bellies belching biliously
Under a throat of crater, gulping down
Humiliation meted through long years.
They gather red momentum in their blood,
Slowly, but surely starting from the soles,
The cracked hard soles of feet neighbour to clay,
Reaching through slow and terrible degrees,
The stomach's lampless pit, the bosom's pit

Estranged from morsels, into the throbbing gullet
And then into the fuming heart and brain
Furnaced with sulphur smokes of agony,
When, with a sudden and concerted urge,
They meet the sudden instant, sovereign moment
Life-lava whipped into fury shooting out
Enormous fireworks celebrating
Swift perishing of lustful cankered structures
Builded by bloody hoarders and exploiters,
Taking their vulgar smugness by surprise.
People united are a stern volcano
That, when the swift historic moment comes,
Vent a volcano venom, vomit lava,
Unbowelling tortured entrails in relief;
Necessity of nature,
Necessity of earth whose broken womb
Cries out for retribution against men
Who dare to tamper with her giant balance
Of miracle at its acme men call Man.
Since nature breathes and grows in harmony
With all things of her making: field and cloud,
Bird, beast and water, mountain, air and man
Rained in high unison, her steady hand
Manoeuvring with established rhythm
Tempos and speeds of straight lines, circles, squares
In geometric journey through the aeons.
Her calculations never go awry
For she is wisdom, and her highest wisdom
Works out its pattern in uncanny ways
Through self-less scientists and noble artists,
Repositories of experience
Garnered in endless time through endless time;
Dark, her clear mathematics which resolve
Brief life to immortality despite
Stark interference of crass ignorance
Imagining itself superior
To knowledge that is humble, patient, pure
With comprehensive essence of all beings,
All forms and splendours from their origin.
Naught is superior or inferior
To aught in her untamperable plan

Of oneness and equality; no headiness
Dwells in her countless details, every detail,
Worthy of life, is conscious of itself
And of its station in the masterpiece.
Who tampers with the plan shall pay for it
With sure extinction. He who breaks her law
Shall by that broken law be surely broken.
Intuition and labour
Leading through long experiments to results
Of miracles, knowledge, bridging space and time,
Were not endowed to men that they might cancel
The larger earth-significance, collective man.
Knowledge was given us to build, not break,
To love, not hate; to bloom, not to decoy.
And when at all she forces us to destroy
Constructively, so the balance be retained.
She brooks not foul aggressors and their brag
Nor cowards masked as heroes.
The blow comes tardily, but when it comes
It cancels irrevocably. Nature's voice
Proclaims today as never before in history:
Life is an earnest granted you, O man.
Not merely to preserve but help to grow
In beauty and glory, wax in a composite knowledge
Shared equally, unbarriered of division,
To gaze with quiet into each other's eyes
And pluck the secret of fraternal joy
Tanging each other's mind with hues of life
Casting no shadow.

I have yielded secrets
Not for misuse but mortal betterment
Leading to longer life until at last
The myth of death is blown up like a dump
Clearing the glad blue spaces of existence.

Toilers are close to Nature,
They know her feel, have heard her voice distinct,
Her fibres tremble on their tired skin,
Her rhythm yet survives
Within their blood, neighbour to mud and rain,

To dust and heat, to the chipped moon and full moon,
To stars resembling dust, and to a sense
Of suns that will yet bring them better days;
Rooted in olden faith they slowly walk
Into a new and more convincing faith,
That they were not created but for toil
Fruitless and bitter,
That the deep agony of woman's travail
Does not create for tragedy and gloom,
Does not create for pleasure but for purpose,
For the fulfilment of significance
And life-magnificence each human face
And human limb was always meant to be.
Man is significant, yea! every man
Who toils and dreams and fashions
Either with hand or heart or luminous mind;
Who does not toil, what right has he to bread?
Who does not add to earth one jot of gift
What claim has he to earth's uncounted gifts?
Who does not render an account of his mind
Through poem, sculpture, music, dance or picture
And of his intellect through precious invention
Enriching Nature's store of mystery
With mystery solved, what right has he to breathe,
To gaze upon the world that is so fair?

Toilers are dear to Nature
Whether they work in factory or field,
Whether they sow or reap, pluck out the ore
From earth's dumb bowels, master black mine-pits
Of coal surcharged with secrets of hue and perfume,
Of oils that feed machines by men controlled,
Men who refuse longer to be machines,
Toilers whose hands are knotted, strong and hard
Resembling tree-boughs moulded out of earth
And nourished by invigorating suns;
They are the real emperors of earth
With life for empire nothing dare destroy
While they are one, devoid
Of the dividing sense of boundary lines
On mischievous maps with blotches which at best

Are ugly bleeding blotches of disease
Long aggravated by ambitious men
Top-dogs of nations ravening for the meat
Of humans, thirsting for the blood of innocents.

• • •

Say now of Lachchmamma of Achchampet Half
gloom to half light whispered in her hut
Of giant glooms outside the glooms of human lives
Weighing in the integrity of life,
Whispered and said: The said shall soon be ours
When you, O Life ! shall triumph over all
Through the unselfish action of such men
As stand united in a single cause
Such men as meet within this humble hut
Where proud beginnings are in silence made.

All day old Lachmi toiled without a word
And while her hands tinkered with pots and pans
Her brain like a wheel revolved upon
The axle of the straight, strong obstinate thought
Covering future distances in time
When tyranny and tyrants shall be done
And life be rid of all its rusted chains,
Equality established, war defeated
And peace encrystallise the earth forever;
Clear eyes of children stained with dread today
Tomorrow all unshadowed of such dread,
When mothers' breasts shall sag no more with grief
Resembling empty shrivelled bags of skin
But once again become the fountain-source
To feed glad generations...
Such a day
Must surely dawn, red like the flower of life
Washed in the blood of martyrs in whose dyings
Life re-evaluates itself and lends
Shining significance to history.
Lachmi was old with wisdoms
Born of long years of tragedy which strove
To break her— but, in vain.
She was not merely just another woman
But a whole history of suffering peasants,

Embodiment of all their hopes and dreams,
The meeting-place of their undaunted wills,
The wrinkles on her body were the wrinkles
Of a great ocean lashed by hurricanes
Symbolic not of weakness but of power.
Her knotted knuckles were the knots of trees
Rooted in earth and unafraid of heaven
Pouring hot lightning lava over them.

Here, every evening came
Six youthful communists under the veil
Of falling darkness; beside the smoky flame
Of an old lantern, each one told a tale
A harrowing tale of heroism and hate.

First Tale

Ramulu was a simple shepherd
Lively and merry and strong.
He tended his sheep the livelong day
And sang the whole evening long;
Today, perhaps, a song of Sri Krishna,
Tomorrow, a cinema song.

His shepherd soul was free as the wind
And his mind, it sang like a bird;
He was quick at catching tunes and so
Whatever that shepherd heard
He reproduced like a gramophone record
Perfectly, word by word.

For music to him was the food of his heart,
It filled his blood with a tang.
The open field and the open sky
With his voice towards evening rang
And seemed to listen carefully
To every note he sang.
He was a simple-hearted fellow
And song was his chief delight;
All that he wore was a loin cloth, and
He could neither read nor write;
Nor easily speak his native tongue
Nor distinguish red from white.

He was only acquainted with field and river,
With each sound of the river, each smell
Of the field, and from the sun's position
The time of the day he could tell,
He had never heard of Jawaharlal
Nor of Vallabhbhai Patel.
He had never heard of Communism
Nor knew what Congress meant,
Of crass political cunning he
Was thoroughly innocent.
He hardly knew there was such a thing
As the Congress government.

Our simple shepherd Ramulu
Was glad as the day was long
He treated his sheep with utmost care
And never did them a wrong;
In a nutshell: song was his very life
And his life itself was a song.

One evening, at set of sun,
He felt his young throat itch
More than ever to sing a song
Which he did, at utmost pitch.
Whenever he sang he felt himself
The richest among the rich.

And so he sang, this time it was
No cinema song, but instead
A song, the words of which were strung
Like fire-beads on a fire-thread;
His heart was whiter than innocence
While the song he sang was red.

He sang it lustily, it was a song
Which seemed like a magic song
Containing coloured hope for men
Whose lives just linger and drag;
It was a song, but he hardly knew,
Of the much tabooed Red Flag.

All heaven heard it with all its ears
Of opening stars in the sky,
And he seemed to pour his soul in the song
And he sang on a note so high
That, in the eyewink, constables
Like shadows passed him by.
But when they recognised the tune,
They stopped for a while and heard
That song which was a marching song
The selfsame one that had stirred
Thousands of peasants everywhere,
It had fire in every word.

"Arrest the traitor", shouted one
"He is of the Communist brand !"
"Of course", said the other "from what he sings
What else can we understand?
Our government's orders are to put down
These reds with an iron hand".

Ramulu, the simple shepherd,
Was caught, handcuffed and led
To the police chowki."What is my crime?"
He asked...the constable said
Nothing in answer; why should they answer
And waste their lungs on a red?

Ramulu was tried in court
And accused by a witness, his neighbour,
Bribed for the purpose, accused of wielding
Bayonet, gun and sabre,
He was found guilty, God knows how !
And doomed to a term of hard labour.

He was found guilty, God knows how !
Or even He doesn't, perhaps.
When a Government wants to doom a man
Even truth nods and naps,
And who dare challenge the justice meted
By the rule of fascist caps?

Outside, the wind stirred like a listening thief
Evesdropping silence heard and marvelled at
The tale of tyranny. The broth of leaves
Bubbled in the old mud-pot on the oven
Of cracked hard mud.
To each of them she offered an earthen cup
Brimful of broth; Now quickly drink that up
Said Lachmi, it will comfort bone and blood.
The gong struck twelve and stillness stiller grew...

Second Tale

"A nice fat cow", the Deshmukh says
with a loud lascivious laugh
"Forthwith tether that cow in my yard
Along with her new-born calf".

The helpless peasant is forced to obey
Though anger within him rages
He is neither paid for the cow nor the calf,
Nor for his sweat, his wages.

Tomorrow in the Deshmukh's house
There'll be a wedding feast,
Guests are invited from neighbouring towns,
A hundred all told, at least.

Since his son is going to be married
To some neighbouring Deshmukh's daughter
So all the goatherds of the village
Must each bring a goat for slaughter.

And the village elders, wrinkled as barks,
Must come with vessels of butter
Without a complaint...complaints were never
Invented for them to utter.

The Deshmukh's mansions must be built
More tall than that of his neighbour
So the village masons must toil in the sun
Without being paid for their labour,
Nor even paid for the bricks they bring

Overladen on their own carts,
So the bricks that go to build his mansion
Are the bricks of broken hearts.

The heavy levy of taxes bends
The backs of peasants who stare
Emptily at the blank horizon
In an attitude of prayer.

But the God of the people is deaf and dumb
And the sun is His eyeless socket
Which is too blind to see those taxes
Bulge the Deshmukh's pocket !

Woe to the peasant woman who dares
To keep away from the field,
She is stripped and whipped in the view of all
Till her blood is blue and congealed.

For the peasant woman and peasant man
Must daily be worked to the bone:
The Deshmukh controls their bodies and souls,
They have no will of their own.

O, who has not heard of the Deshmukh
Outbruter of brutes who rape,
From whom the village virgin ever
Hardly found escape.

He prowls about in Suryapet,
His face, a hardened crust,
Rendering every village into
His hunting ground of lust.

Twentyfive hundred women already
Polluted in body and limb
Have been hunted down like helpless prey
Yea, captured and raped by him.

That was his '47 list
When he was just thirtyfive;

Do you blame the peasants then, if they want
To strangle such brutes alive?

Do you blame them if they rise in wrath
At the damage done to their lives?
A tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye,
To avenge their daughters and wives !
Barely just twenty years ago
The virgin bride, it is said,
Was forced to spend her bridal night
On the landlord's lousy bed.

He did with her what he wanted to do,
And said what he wanted to say,
Then sent her crumpled and tired and worn
To her mate on the following day.

Do you blame the peasant, then, I ask,
If he wakes and rebels at last
Remembering the sorrow and shame
Inflicted on him in the past?

Uniting under their blood-red flag
The people grow stronger and stronger
Shouting: down with the landlord's brag,
We shall brook it no more, nor longer !

And as the darkness deepened, midnight held
Its breath of fierce cold stars as if to listen
To its own magnitude of mystery:
Crackles of leaves and twigs, a jackal's cry
Somewhere, the sombre river-wash of waves,
Blotches of ink-blue shadows brooding over
The scattered hamlet, every hut whereof
Was a potential tomb and every peasant
Life's careless snapshot of the living dead
With outline indistinct and out of focus.

Yet, in this humble hut of clay and wattle,
Lachmi's historic hut, the midnight knew
That some immortal dawn was being discussed

More radiant than brief dawns within its womb,
The dawn of life, the dawn of man, the dawn
Of freedom that shall never brook a chain,
Of freedom that shall cancel human tears,
Of freedom that shall banish tyranny
And send the insolent tyrant to his doom

One of the six who met within that hut
Recounted what he witnessed
While Lachchmamma sat like a statue there
In the half-light, her eyes two wells of age
From which time's vessels in the past had drawn
Much water and much blood. The tale was told:

As a raw blood-red sun went down the hill
And sinking left dull afterglow behind,
The village-folk met where two cross-lanes meet
And at the base of their ancestral tree
Hoary with age, decided on a strike
Whatever be the consequence...

One will

Ran like a current through the village-folk
Electrifying the grey atmosphere
Of erstwhile helpless sorrow. That is will,
The people's will no power on earth dare shake,
No menace challenge... It houses sudden lightnings.
Is builded of inherent mountain power;
Resounds like twenty million waves
Revealing huge ocean capacity
That naught can tame once it is roused to rise.
And so, the village struck. The landlord heard
The knell strike of his days
Reverberating dark and certain doom.....
The bent back of the village
On which his father rode, on which himself
He had been riding for a dozen years
And thought to ride for full two dozen more;
The bent back of the village
Had, of a sudden, thrilled and grown erect,

The village stood erect, its blood turned sap,
Its nerves turned harp strings of new-humming faith.

Third Tale

Here is the tale of a neighbouring landlord
Whose hands were black with pillage
Who, idle drone, fed fat upon
The peasants toil and tillage
The tale I tell, a typical tale,
Is of a neighbouring village.

Tell the landlord we refuse
To tack his soles and mend his shoes
said the cobblers of the village.

Tell him to perform our chores,
Sweep the floors and dust the doors,
said the servants of the landlord.

Tell him we decline to run
Errands for him in the sun,
said the runners of the village.

Even pigs have gone on strike,
Clean your own dirt, if you like,
said the sweepers of the village.

For him, whom our village loathes,
We refuse to stitch his clothes,
said the tailors of the village.

With our sweat we swell the soil.
He keeps bloating on our toil,
said the village water-carriers.

Are we frightened of his frown?
He knows that we can beat him down,
said the people of the village.

Our landlord didn't figure that
Today he'd tremble like a rat,
said the women of the village.

Shave him? Yes, indeed, we mean
Once for all to shave him clean,
said the barbers of the village.

We shall not sell oil to the scamp,
We'll make a widow of his lamp,
said the oilmen of the village.

We refuse to wash his shirt
Like his conscience stained with dirt,
said the dhobis of the village.

The days of tyranny are done
The tyrants tumble one by one,
The village echoed and re-echoed.

The pale light flickered in the listening room
Casting strange shadows on the brown mud-walls,
While on the window-sill, in the half-gloom
A lizard crept hunting for vagabond moths;
A licence brimmed with omens, frothed with foam
Of furtive whispers
And the gong struck two.
A fourth tale was recounted. Lachmi wrapped
Her body in a bristly rug and listened;

Fourth Tale

He was married under the new moon,
A mother's only son
In the whole wide wide, world that widowed mother
Other than him had none.
He was married under the new moon
To a new-blown village maid
Who wore her hair, as dark as a raven,
In a jasmine-woven braid.

And like the new moon her beauty
Would grow to fullness soon
Since in herself she bore already
The sense of a ripening moon.

On their first sweet nuptial night they knew
The springtime's roseal stir:
He was eighteen years of age,
Just three years older than her.

On that first great night of nuptials
Time lapped like a perfumed tide:
"We must work for our people together" whispered
The bridegroom to his bride;

"We must work until, in the future
No fetters for us exist...
You must not forget that you are now
The wife of a Communist".

The first night passed and the next night
The third and the fourth—and then
(O how shall I describe the scene
Even with a poet's pen?)

On the fifth night of the marriage
While the village lay fast asleep
At dead of dark when darkness
Itself was at its deep,

The bony dogs began to bay,
To whine at the moon and bark
As though some evil omen
Had suddenly gripped the dark.
The stars were covered up by a cloud,
And the moon-glow went on strike....
Hark ! the midnight is torn to shreds
By the throb of a motor-bike.

The slumbering village-paths awoke
And trembled under the sky
Disturbed by its jaundiced lamp which glared
In front like a demon's eye.

The bike escorted a lorry
That threatened the village peace,

It was crowded with saviours of the Congress
The military police.

And so, at the dead of midnight
For miles the village around
Stricken with dread had suddenly
Become a burial-ground.

The lorry and the motor-bike
Stopped dead at a door and then
"Come out of your hole, you Communist rat !"
Shouted the butcher men

The butcher men
To whom it gives delight
To carry out the order: Shoot
A communist at sight !

They battered the door with butt-ends
And shattered it open wide.
"Ho, ho, ho !" they shouted and jeered
"The bridegroom sleeps with his bride !"

Out of their butcher hearts and eyes
Vulgarity darkly drips.
While crooked lust holds blood-stained rule
In each line and curve of their lips.
"The bed you sleep on, Communist !
Is poor and ragged and rough,
We feel it is not really
Quite comfortable enough...

"Why does your young wife sob and wail?
And why does your mother weep?
We have come to assure them you will now
Have an honest nuptial sleep".

They dragged him out of his bridal bed,
Shouted an officer; bind him !
Then in an instant with a tough rope
They tied up his hands behind him.

"Shoot !" and the instant the order was given
A shot rang out and rent
Not only the heart of the watching earth
But the whole of the firmament.

"He is only a corpse now and has ceased
To be a Communist,
Thanks to our high efficiency
There's one less left on our list."

They left his body lying there
So loyal, so young, so brave:
The heart of every one of his people
Became his honoured grave.

They buried him under a shady tree
And planted a Red Flag there
To mark his memory and set
A blood-red seal on the air.

Lachmamma rose to feed the lamp with oil
With these same feeble hands which fed
A hundred comrades in her time...
And while she fed it, in an underbreath
She muttered to herself;
With torture they can hurt
The flesh but not the spirit,
With bullets they might pierce a hero's body
But not the heroism which bares
The body to the bullet,
That heroism is immortal,
It lives forever in the surging people,
The surging and undaunted people
Who give the country heroes...

The flame awakened and the darkness bled
To golden lustre.
Let me tell a tale,
Said the fifth comrade perched upon the box
Wherein old Lachmi housed her ragged clothes.

Fifth Tale

Brothers, We must not forget
That our village fields are wet
With our blood and with our sweat:
Kumarayya told the people.

Even while our harvests swell
Wherefore are we forced to dwell
In starvation's burning hell?
Kumarayya asked the people.

Toiling, boiling in the heat
We produce the corn and wheat.
Have we got no right to eat?
Kumarayya asked the people.

Must we toil and sweat in vain?
Did the landlord sow the grain?
Did he make the cloud and rain?
Kumarayya asked the people.

On our grain-stocks grown obese
Lo, the landlord swills in ease,
We have swelled his granaries,
Kumarayya told the people.

We, the starved and living dead,
Worse than dumb beasts we are led,
Even his dogs are better fed,
Kumarayya told the people.

Hunger burns us up and drives
Coffin nails into the lives
Of our mothers, children, wives,
Kumarayya told the people.

Let us in a humble tone
Ask the landlord for a loan
Of grain we grow he calls his own,
Kumarayya told the people.

Soon was a petition sent:
Loan us grain; its our intent
To return you what is lent...
Kumarayya wrote the landlord.

We don't beg it at your door,
Loan us just the grain...(no more)
That we need out of your store...
Kumarayya wrote the landlord.

Three months passed...but no reply
Was forthcoming. "Why must I
Notice peasants? let them die !"
Thought the bloated callous landlord.

"Peasants are a putrid race,
When they perish, in their place
New ones come in any case",
Thought the base intriguing landlord.

No more kneeling on our knees,
Let us take hold of the keys
And open up his granaries,
Kumarayya told the people.

But it must not be a black
Theft or criminal attack,
What we take we'll give him back,
Kumarayya told the people.

When the harvests swell again,
We shall work with might and main
And return the taken grain,
Kumarayya told the people.

The attack was not delayed,
Kumarayya, unafraid,
Equal distribution made
Of the grain that was collected.

Landlord ! we are hungry, and
Surely you will understand

We are tillers of your land,
Spoke the people of the village.

How long can we live on air?
Driven by hunger and despair
People rise and do and dare,
Said the people of the village.

Though this grain we take is grown
By our hands, our very own,
We look upon it as a loan,
Said the people of the village.

Next harvest-time our sole concern
Shall be to see to it we earn
Enough of grain-stocks to return.
Vowed the people of the village.

But madness filled the landlord's head,
His eyeballs rolled a furnace-red,
"I'll see your mischief-maker dead !"
Swore the landlord to his hirelings:

Those hireling in an instant went,
Told the police of the event,
And of their master's proud intent;
A squad of armed police came rattling.

Young Kumarayya, Communist,
Was not a worm to twine and twist
While one by one the bullets hissed
And mowed him down, his body riddled.

"Today all Telangana dips
Her banners in the blood that drips
And trickles down his quiet lips"
Swore the people round the body.

And the last sentence on them was:
"Comrades ! ...fight on without a pause.
Fight bravely in the people's cause..."
Young hero he of Telangana.

The gong struck three...with every stroke of gong
A sound went out to search the stillness
While in the gathered shadows lurked a man
With lurid eyes glowering like those of a beast
In search of prey. He was a bribe-won brute
Set on the village; crouching among bushes,
Creeping upon his belly like a worm
Crawling along the lane, ducking in gutters
At the least sound suspicious
Some eye was spying on the spy himself,
He reached the courtyard wall of Lachmi's hut
And under the pendulous stillness of the night
Eavesdropped, and in the dawn
Like night's own shadow-within-shadow fled
Slouching and slinking like a eunuch sleuth:
"They are found at last. I'll have them shot
And she who hides them as a miser gold
Shall soon declare herself and all she hides".

One woman saw that shadow sliding by .....

"Good neighbour Lachmi: they are on your scent
The hounds are on your scent, be on your guard,
They thirst for blood...! say, be on your guard:
I saw a shadow through the shadows pass
It trembled and it twisted,
His cloak was like a cloud.
Beware ! it might have hid a lightning stroke".
She was the farmer's wife whose eyes were sharp
As any hawk's, her countless timely warnings
Had rescued comrades from unpredictable torture,
Had saved the village from collective doom.

Some distant cock
Crowed the reluctant oncoming of dawn,
And Lachmi yawned. "Some say the dead who walk
All night in darkness, stealing out of their graves.
Unto their graves return at early cockcrow:
"We, too, are like the dead" one comrade jested,
"We come out of our hiding places, graves
Of mystery throughout the time of the day,
Returning to them at the earliest cockcrow !"

Lachmamma laughed a little tired laugh
And yawned again: "You must be on your guard,
And from today, I'll reach your food to you.
You must *not* come and be caught unawares
Here, in this hut..."

And what about yourself? "O !
I am old and wrinkled; my life already
Is at the threshold of unending sleep;
They will not find much pleasure
In binding me in ropes or bending me

Under a weight of torture; and as for bullets,
They would not care to waste even one on me!
Yet, if they did, by any chance, my sons!
They could not ever bend me, nor extract
One word out of this mouth which has for years
Uttered the holy mantra: Revolution!
No military threat could ever bend me,
No threat of any tyrant..." Then, with a smile
Packing a world of sad significance,
She said: "The only thing that tried to bend me
Was old age. Yet, you see how straight I walk,
How high I hold my head, how measured perfect
My pace along the road to the market-square
Have you not noticed me unbendable?"

The comrades said: "You are the chronicle
In time, of timeless courage, sacrifice
Beyond description. You have been to us
The fountain-source of old experience
From which we have been drawing for long days
Clothing ourselves in steel, such stubborn steel
As makes the landlord wince, the prince go down
Upon a pair of weakly trembling knees,
The guns of government grew impotent!"
Then one last tale was told.....

Sixth Tale

They sought him and found him,
They caught him and bound him

And brought him and shot him....
"Who dare overthrow us?"

They shouted and then
They addressed all the men
That were present: 'Now show us
The wife of this Communist leader of yours,
The vilest of vipers, the worst of all whores!"

The sun—it was setting a great red
Blotch of pure fire in the sky;
The people were burning with hatred,
There was fire in every eye
That watched the police who had taken the lives
Of their leaders, dishonoured their mothers and wives.

"Where is the woman?" they shouted
"Does she think she can hide?
Where is the woman?" they shouted
But no one replied.

"Since no one has told us the truth and nobody has spoken
Your obstinate asinine will shall be presently broken".
That's what they shouted,
Those concerned cantankerous brutes whose own will
had been flouted!
Then, marching them off to the station, they flogged them until
They found it had only re-doubled and strengthened their will!

"No bullet can threaten, nor baton" one said
"The more we are tortured
The riper the fruit, the more fiery and red
On the tree of revolt in our orchard!"
That is what somebody said!

"Who dared such an insolent statement?"
"You bloodhounds! I dared it
And here is my breast for your bullet..."
So saying, he bared it
And a shot rang out; one last breath strove, and he heaved it,
The wound gushed blood..."A Red Star!" said the

night—and received it!
"Where is the woman? they shouted
"That Communist whore?"
But nobody answered, the officers spat
Hot venom and swore...

Nobody offered a word of betrayal,
The lips of the village were sealed,
That night the moon itself was a mouth
Shut on the secrets of hut and field.

One humble Muslim family
Protected her precious life
Risking their own for the noble sake
Of their leader's widowed wife.

But alas ! one day in a bloody fray
She was shot along with three
But they did not know and still don't know
That the woman they shot was—she!

The morning passed through noon to afternoon
And then the evening came and then the night;
Above, the sky kept swimming with a moon,
In Lachmi's hut flickered a yellow light...
You old pathetic oil-lamp on the shelf,
She almost seems pathetic as yourself...
Pathetic? yes, the half-light in her room
Imparted to her face a curious look
Of certain anguish and impending doom:
Experience had read her like a book
From page to page, and now, without a sigh,
The time had come to shut and lay it by.

A dozen armed police stood at her door:
"Where are the undergrounders?"
"Sorry, sir!
I do not understand you..."
"Where, we ask,
Are the six Communist dogs your hands have fed
Night after night?"

"I do not understand"
"You don't? we'll shortly make you understand!
Tell us, old woman! have you hidden them?"

A dagger gleam of hatred from her eye
Flashed suddenly and stabbed the darkness through.
"I've never hidden anything beyond
A terrible contempt for such as you
And for the government you represent!

"We understand"...
So saying, Inspector
Ordered her into the waiting ominous lorry
Which drove away, rattling on rugged roads,
Towards the butcher-house, their police station.
The village stood dumb-founded,
The villagers were petrified with dread;
She was their strength, their never-faltering mother,
The wise old elder heroine of the village,
Loved, honoured, trusted, sung and adulated.

"Somebody has betrayed her..." The farmer's wife
Had saved six comrades by her timely warning
But Lachmi has exposed herself to the storm,
The fierce red storm of vengeance.

A police station is a house of death,
Its air exudes the breath of leather and sweat,
Is heavy with a sense of groans and tortures
Standing a-tiptoe on the edge of waiting,
Clanking of chains, unfriendly feel of bars.
Count walls and bleeding glooms....
"You will not speak? Not even under the cat-o'nine-tail kiss?"

"I will not speak".
"Now, for the hundredth time,
Will you not speak and tell us where they are,
Those Communist marauders, murderers?"
At this old Lachmi toughed contemptuously,
Then with all heaven's light upon her face

She spoke in fearless accents:
"You alone

Are the marauders and the murderers,
The rapists, torturers, executioners,
The cowards, the tyrants, the worms, the stinking stooges
Without a conscience; traitors of the people:
Your day is done. Listen to the voice of my people
Addressing you through me before I die:

With torture you can hurt
The flesh but not the spirit;
With bullets you may pierce
The flesh but not the spirit;
You can bore many holes
In the body with your bullets,
But not one single hole
In the heroism which bares
The body to the bullet:
A hero is immortal,
He lives within the people
Who give the country heroes.
You slay men, you butchers!
But can you slay ideas?

They slit her two thighs open
Until the raw flesh hung the bleeding chunks
As though they were the bleeding mouths
Of incontrovertible prophecy
Shouting their doom...
"And now, for the last time,
You will not speak?"
"I shall not even groan
For your enjoyment, filthy fascist butchers !"

"Put leeches into the slit in either thigh
And let them lick her ebbing Communist blood".
''I'd rather lend my blood to poor dumb leeches
Than to you herd of low blood-thirsty swine".

The leeches, rooted in her bleeding flesh,
Sucked on and on. The brutes looked on and laughed.
"She will speak now...."

"Our suffering is your death.
Our death is a new life for those to come
After us, and for our fighters who survive
Who soon shall overthrow your government
Establishing a people's government".

This is no prophecy
But calculation of historic logic
Which shatters empires, topples over thrones
And humbles the most insolent of kings
Sending them ragged to their naked graves.

"You will not speak?"
She will not speak forever,
Her heart sank fast, her aged eyes were drawn
Like two pure curtains on a world,
A world of honoured secrets,
Deep treasures unbetrayed.

The police station proved a battlefield,
Where she had triumphed, like to many before her;
A holy cause, the holiest, had triumphed,
The cause of crying centuries,
The people's cause, the cause of men, of Man
Who puts to shame the cell, the whip, the bullet,
Manacle and heated irons,
Since every man within a world of men
Is a tremendous world of heart and of brain,
Of tune and colour and divine creation
Exceeding the earth-limit ever receding
To other limits beyond its own ken
Until no present mystery remains
A mystery, and heavens do not turn
On starry axles in inane aloofness.

The world of men belongs to Man alone
Of whom the gods are bodiless images

Projected on the screen of superstition
Woven of self-inflicted fears,
Dark self-escapes into captivity
Of sorrowful inferiorities,
Imaginary abasements;
Man is time's watermark
Upon the parchment of eternity
Sealed with each moon and sun
Announcing surely, bit by bit unrolled
The final triumph of humanity,
The triumph of each
Over himself and all the universe,
When there shall be no more of womb-waste
To feed war-flames, since every birth shall mark
A victory for the collective man
Already in the making.